

MABEL NORMAND

A Source Book to Her Life and Films



By Wm. Thomas Sherman
2000-2015.

**Mabel Normand:
A Source Book To
Her Life and Films**
Seventh Edition.

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Dedicated to Marilyn Slater,
whose love and enthusiasm provided this project new life when most needed.

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Preface

The *Mabel Normand Source Book* has gone through a number of transformations since its initial inception. And although I knew back in the earliest phase of this project that there is and just about always has been mysteries surrounding Mabel's story, little did I realize the very strange kinds of difficulties and puzzles I would end up encountering.

Undoubtedly the most remarkable of these, as it turned out, was the question "were there actually two 'Mabel Normand's'?" Or, put somewhat differently, did Mabel have a regular double who at different times performed *starring* roles under her name? Although I have been understandably reluctant to broach the subject previously, it may as it turns out indeed be the case that Mabel did have a possibly *frequent* double who was used in some of her films, and who people took, and to this day take to be, Mabel Normand, but who was an entirely different person, and who was or was not actually related to her by family. Moreover, by "double," I don't mean a mere stand-in for a scene in a film in which both appear. Rather, I mean a double that can work for the other when the latter, say, takes the day off or else is unable (for one reason or other) to work. When I brought this to someone's attention recently, they thought I might be joking. First then let me be plain – no, I am not joking. To give you a sense of what this is about, take for instance the Mabel we see in *Oh, Those Eyes* (1912) in contrast to the one in *Tomboy Bessie* (1912); or the Mabel in *The Speed Kings* (1913) and the Mabel in *Mabel's Dramatic Career* (1913); the Mabel in the 1915 "Fatty and Mabel" shorts and the one in *Fatty and Mabel Adrift* (1916); the Mabel in *The Floor Below* (1918); that in *What Happened to Rosa* (1920) and then, further,, the one in *Molly O'* (1921) and *Suzanna* (1922); the Mabel we see in *Raggedy Rose* (1926) versus the one we see in *The Nickel-Hopper* (1926); the Mabel of *The Extra Girl* (1923), and the one photographed in 1927 with Charlie Chaplin at a movie premiere (as shown in an insert in Betty Fussell's *Mabel: Hollywood's First I Don't Care Girl*, just after page 82.) In viewing these films and photographs you will see a noticeable and significant difference in how "Mabel" appears. Though these discrepancies of appearance do not themselves prove the fact, yet they are, notwithstanding, very striking in what might be their implication. Meanwhile, the "double" theory would help explain how when at a time or else very shortly after she was reportedly ill or injured it was possible for her to be filmed appearing in seemingly the best of health. Of note also, in closing remarks by Mabel in an article from the *Sunday Times* of Perth, Australia, for May 3, 1914, she somehow felt it necessary to send an adoring fan two *separate* autographed photos of herself.

Nor must we rely on mere surface appearances in order to determine if there is or is not something more to this suspicion. For example, one possible thing to look for in attempting to distinguish the one from the other Mabel, and on more reliable forensic grounds, is teeth. It would seem the real Mabel's teeth have a very slight unevenness; whereas the "other" Mabel's are more smooth and straight.

Now those who have studied silent films stars more closely will know that it is very true, the same person can look very different due to both personal reasons and how they are photographed. Nonetheless, on the basis of such as the film examples given above, and other evidence, such as the inordinately large number of films credited to Mabel, *or* Keystone contemporary Fred J. Balshofer's casual yet telling remark:

"He [Henry Lehrman] saw the picture with Mabel in the bathing suit, his always nimble mind clicked. He suggested a bevy of bathing beauties for the [Keystone] stock company, and out of this idea grew the Mack Sennett bathing beauties. Among the early bathing beauties to join the company was a beautiful sixteen-year-old who looked enough like Mabel Normand to pass as her twin sister. She not only had the looks but a plan she thought was the path to becoming a star, and she wasted no time in displaying her charms." (*One Reel a Week*, page 81)

I believe then the question is at least now worth tabling. And even if there is only such as the above to support such radical speculation, could one continue (being acquainted with such anomalies) to remain completely silent? As disagreeable as the inference is that there were two "Mabel's," I must be honest, and do then state that I myself am inclined to believe there were, albeit to some as yet unknown or at least unclear extent. Yet this asserted, I candidly concede I may somehow, when all is said and done, be wrong in this conjecture, and there may be an alternative explanation to these disparities. As well, there is the *not unimportant question* -- even if there was this second "Mabel," *how frequently* was

she actually employed (to represent the other?) And, of course, we will not be surprised to find someone who would dismiss such a claim as preposterous to begin with.

Yet others, as well, will perhaps not be so easily satisfied with this Ben Turpin-like solution -- but for other reasons, and might contend that if there were *two* Mabel Normand's then this of itself makes her out to be a fraud, and consequently not worth bothering with. Although myself not a little irked, not to mentioned embarrassed, by having to adopt such a conclusion as I do, I think the more sensible course is simply to revise our outlooks, and at least be more cautious and circumspect when we discuss Mabel and or her films. If there was something unethical in what these *purported* two did, there can be little doubt that they did ultimately suffer for it, perhaps terribly. In and for this we should have compassion, while being prepared to adapt, as necessary, to a major change in our understanding of the silent film comedienne and her career.

For whether it is Mabel Normand I or the alleged Mabel Normand II being viewed, we are in both instances nevertheless still viewing a most interesting and very talented person who, in either case, stands out as someone unique and extraordinary in silent films. Though I can go no further than this preface in addressing this question, and the main text will continue to speak of Mabel Normand as one person, my raising the issue here, it is hoped, will at least dispel *some* darkness and possible confusion; while assisting others who might in future be better situated than myself at present to look into and consider it.

This said and despite, there is an essential unity to the career of "Mabel Normand" such that I think the *Source Book* can nonetheless inform and aid in making sense of the facts -- that is as long as we are not willfully blind to what this double theory might suggest or imply. At the very least we've acknowledge the possibility of the problem. And though, for example, the remarks and reflections made concerning Mabel in my essays, may after all and oddly, pertain to someone different than *Mabel proper*, even so, who and what I am describing and discussing are real and of value -- only we must be wary of and alert to the possible difference with respect to identity -- infrequently though this problem might arise. Extremely awkward as this is, far better it than either believing something mistaken or else thoughtlessly tossing aside what is otherwise still of undeniable worth and significance.

Some might understandably be shocked or perhaps even feel some anguish by the suggestion of their being a regular double. Yet, if we stop and think, this is only because the conclusion forces us to admit there is much we don't know -- and which we otherwise thought we did. Granted the additional complication can hardly be seen as something welcome. Yet the simple remedy to this dilemma is patience, caution, and further research and scrutiny. In time, what at first seems alarming to accept and difficult to assent to, can be made less perplexing and easier to grasp. So that what was earlier a great novelty will, as a result of being better explained and understood become so familiar to us as to become old hat.

The mystery of the (possible) two Mabel's is far from being the only controversy that remains. There is still much to be known and understood generally about what was really going on in the gathering, construction, and dismantling of silent era Hollywood, not to mention the "true story" behind many of the more well-known scandals, such as the William Desmond Taylor case. Yet this then is in part what history and biography are all about; namely to make the record more clear and better comprehended. Our erring along the way is only human, and yet pardonable, as long as our quest for the truth is just and sincere and our assessment of the facts disinterested.

Wm. Thomas Sherman
Seattle, Washington

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Mabel Normand: An Introductory Biography

Known during her relatively brief reign and at the height of her popularity by such titles as “The Queen of Comedy” and the “Female Chaplin,” Mabel Normand was an actress and comedienne unique to movie history; most significantly because of the pivotal roles she played both in early film comedy’s development and in the founding of modern film celebrity, and the history of the silent film era in Hollywood can hardly be understood without making an effort to understand Mabel and her place in it. Although for a while she was among *the* most favorite and praised of film stars, in about the mid 1920’s that career took a pronounced downward turn due to unjustified and, to some extent, malicious scandal being leveled against her. So that it was not until a much later date (and aside from direct and indirect memorializing of her by Mack Sennett and associates), starting about the 1960’s, that film historians began taking and evaluating the role she played and her work much more seriously. Even so, she has always had her very enthusiastic fans and admirers, even after scandal struck, and to this day she continues to inspire a special devotion in them special, if not entirely unique, for its lasting durability. Hollywood chronicler Adela Rogers St. Johns perhaps best expressed this kind of feeling she evoked, and in some still evokes, when in attempting to describe her she wrote “Not of this world.”

The majority of Mabel’s films were made when Hollywood was in its infancy and movies just dawning as a major form of entertainment, and she arrived on the scene at a time when the movies were, by trial and error, feeling their way into existence. Unlike stage performers up to that time, the new movie stars, because of the widespread distribution of film, obtained a level of public recognition and familiarity known to a relatively small few entertainers and performers before then. As one of the screen’s earliest and most recognizable screen stars, Mabel was also one of the first and most extensively known of modern media celebrities. Further, she took on this new mantle with an independent mindedness and creative self-awareness relatively rare among her contemporaries. Indeed, when it came to bucking stiff convention and bypassing bland conformity, it would be no exaggeration to characterize her as one of Hollywood’s very first rebels – yet a rebel very much with a heart, not to mention a warm and credible sense of humor. And though internationally acknowledged as one of the highest touted of movie royalty, she made a point of using that prominence to identify and sympathize with ordinary and common people both in her work and in her well known charitable giving in private life.

As well as evincing on and off screen both a non-conformist daring and a warm empathy toward others, Mabel was (or at least, when circumstances of the moment were not too trying, *could be*) a highly skilled actress and insightful depicter of character. True, later illness and misfortune understandably hindered her from realizing her greater potential. Yet in her relatively short span, she exhibited an impressively wide range of feeling and expression in her performances. Bob Hope once remarked of someone (Lucille Ball) that “to be a good comedienne, you have to be a good actress.” And as comedienne she ranks as one of the very best, even for the very competitive era in which she lived. Like Roscoe Arbuckle, her frequent co-star, were it not for scandal and other personal mishaps, she would rightly be included with Chaplin, Keaton, and Lloyd as one of the seminal talents of her generation. Her flair for comic invention and the depth of human insight she displayed compare favorably with the achievement of these other now more famous stars in these respects. Yet in terms of sheer funniness, she not only could match, but at times was even capable of surpassing all four – most especially during her days at Keystone and earlier.

According to the family as represented by grandnephew, Stephen Normand, Mabel Ethelreid¹ Normand was born on November 9, 1892, in New Brighton, Staten Island, New York, the youngest of three surviving children. U.S. census records for 1900 and 1910, on the other hand and by mathematical implication based on age, give the birth year as 1893; while accounts published during her lifetime usually report her birth as November 10, with the year

¹ In some legal documents shortened to “Ethel.”

listed usually being 1894 or 1895, and the location variously as Boston, M.A.; Providence, R.I. and Atlanta, G.A. Although the specific birth date is perhaps subject to slight debate, there does not seem to have been any question that Staten Island is both the correct site of her birth and locale of her upbringing. The family originally resided on Tysen St. in New Brighton, Richmond Borough but afterward removed to Sands St. in Stapleton where Mabel passed most of her childhood.² Her parents were Mary Drury Normand, of Irish-Catholic background, and Claude G. Normand, of French-Canadian extraction (himself hailing originally from Canada.) Claude, in addition to being a carpenter working from home, was an itinerant piano-player who served as a musician for small theaters and clubs when he could. Yet despite his talents, more often than not the family struggled to make ends meet. Of their children, only four survived childbirth: Ralph, Claude, Jr. (also Claude Drury), Gladys, and Mabel; with Ralph dying in his teens of tuberculosis.³

Mabel was raised a Catholic and is known to have attended Public School No. 17, New Brighton. There was a movie house on Staten Island as early as 1894 that she presumably visited it. Otherwise, relatively little is really known about these earliest years, and most of *that* is scattered about in contemporary and posthumously published reminiscences and autobiographies.⁴

After being employed for a time at the Butterick garment factory, in 1909 she took up modeling⁵ while having aspirations to be a musical and or pictorial artist. Arriving in the morning from Staten Island by way of the ferry, she would spend her day working on and off in various New York City artists and photographer studios. In 1924, she later recalled:

"Up to the time I left school there was nothing eventful or particularly interesting in my life. My mother lived on Staten Island and I attended school, the last few years, at North Westport, Mass., near Martha's Vineyard. Once a month I went home, in charge of a stewardess on the Fall River Line, but I stayed at school, during the summer, studying hard and trying to skip a class and get ahead faster. I was tremendously ambitious in those days. We had very little money and even my occasional trips home were a great expense.

² *Staten Island Advance*, Nov. 8, 1973.

³ The information below, and which suggests 1893 as her actual year of birth, is taken from the 1900 United States Census, Microfilm T623 1153 Date of census, June 5, 1900, for township of Richmond, City of New York:

"Norman [sic], Claude: born Sept. 1855, 44 years of age, married 15 years, Place of birth N.Y., occupation: carpenter, [His parents are both listed incorrectly as being born in N.Y.]

Minnie J. or Minne [Mary Drury, "Minnie" and "Min" were nicknames]: born May 1867, 33 years of age, married 15 years, Place of birth N.Y., (her own mother was born in Ireland; father in Rhode Island)

Ralph: born May 1886, 14 years of age, Place of birth R.I., at school

Claude: born July 1890, 10 years of age, Place of birth N.Y., at school

Mabel: born November 1893, age 7 years

Home is rented."

⁴ Though we can't confirm all its particulars, some of which are still questionable such as her attending a convent, there is also the following from Vernon B. Hampton's *Staten Island's Claim to Fame: The Garden Spot of New York Harbor*, pp. 147-148, from 1925 that is worth reproducing (though at present we are in no position to confirm all its particulars:)

"Miss Normand showed a precocity which foretold her future success. As a child, -- a mere slip of a girl, -- her vivacity attracted others to her. Winsome ways and pronounced beauty pointed towards the one career where such qualities were in demand.

"At three years of age, Mabel was taking dancing lessons, adding gracefulness and ease to the other qualifications she naturally possessed. She early showed a bent towards a stage career. During playtimes, acting was her hobby. While attending school on Staten Island, she took part in dramatics, starring in school and class plays. The future cinema star graduated from Westerleigh Collegiate Institute, Staten Island, and entered the Theatrical School where she was in training for several years. She was also four years in a well-known Boston Convent.

"As has already been indicated, Mabel Normand throughout her girlhood, was a leader in various enterprises. Her spirit and ability made her the leader at school and college. She took stellar roles in all the plays, and her winsome ways brought her the plaudits of her companions and friends from freshman days to graduation.

"From a swimming and diving contest, which Miss Normand meritoriously won, she was taken into the theatrical field. She appeared for a time on the legitimate stage. Her entry into the motion picture world with D. W. Griffith and Max Sennett, with whom she starred in both drama and comedy. Repeatedly she received the best parts, and received enviable salaries for her acting. As a screen star, Mabel Normand holds the first rank.

"During the years of her success on the stage, the noted Staten Islands has likewise held sway in many a national contest. Her California home is adorned with the prizes and trophies she has won for dancing, as a bathing beauty, and in other events. She is also an accomplished pianist.

"Mabel Normand is no less devoted to her parents than to her art. Her father is an industrial craftsman, who diligently plies his trade of stage carpenter, at which he is a master. Her mother is quiet and reserved, and greets the visitor with a pleasant smile.

"Friendly eyes, beaming from beneath coy black curls, brighten at mention of her successful daughter. Mabel's affection for her parents is seen in the beautiful home on St. Marks Place, St. George, Staten Island, which is the gift of Mabel to her parents. The letters which she writes to her mother and father are newsy, and interesting and full of deep regard.

"Within the spacious rooms in the green-towered house at 125 St. Mark's Place, one finds the artistic taste of the actress evident everywhere."

⁵ In the 1910 census, Mabel's occupation is entered as "poser."

"I wanted to finish as soon as I could, so I could learn more about the things that particularly interested me. I was crazy about music and drawing. I wanted to be a big musician. And I've never really lost that desire. Even up to last year I used to practice six or seven hours a day at the piano, when I could possibly get the time to do so.

"But I didn't get ahead as fast as either my mother or myself hoped I would. Lack of money for proper instruction handicapped me, and when a friend of ours, who was also a friend of Hamilton King, the artist, suggested that I could earn money posing for him, mother finally agreed. I stopped school at Martha's Vineyard, came home to Staten Island and went to work for Mr. King, continuing my studies in drawing and music at night. This was when I was 14 years old.

"I became a member of the Art Students' League, where it is possible to get competent instruction at night at a nominal cost, and I spent all day posing, at first for Mr. King and then for other artists and illustrators.

"Most of the work I did was to pose for heads for magazine covers. And I didn't like it. I hated to stand still. I hated to be simply a means by which someone else was creating something. I wanted to do it myself, but I couldn't. I had only the longing, without the ability.

"I received \$1.50 in the morning and the same amount in the afternoon for posing. Thirty cents of that went for carfare and ferry fare and I had to spend a little money for lunch. Sometimes, however, I didn't get any lunch. I used my lunch hour instead to pose for a commercial photographer. Wearing a hat or a dress that he wanted to photograph, we models would stand around in front of the camera during the noon hour and he would sell the pictures to trade journals."⁶

Among the painters and illustrators she posed for were Charles Dana Gibson, creator of the Gibson girl, and James Montgomery Flagg, probably best remembered today for his Uncle Sam Wants You recruiting poster. As well, she stood or sat for many advertising photographers modeling various articles of clothing,⁷ while helping to sell everything from soap and necklaces to combs and shoes. In these different sessions, she learned how to portray or enact various emotions, gestures, and poses; and which proved invaluable preparation for her subsequent work in films.

Sometime in the autumn of 1910, in the wake of fellow model Alice Joyce's going to work for the Kalem Film Company, and afterwards, as well, at the suggestion of Frank Lanning, a Biograph actor who sometimes modeled as Indians and the like for illustrators, she obtained a job as a bit player at D. W. Griffith's American Mutoscope and Biograph film company (or Biograph for short) located at 11 East 14th Street in New York, and subsequently participated in small parts in one or two films. It was also about this time that she first made the acquaintance of Biograph actor and recently made director, Mack Sennett. However, when further employment at Biograph that season wasn't available because most of the company had gone West to film in California for the mid winter and spring, she went and sought work at the "Commodore" J. Stuart Blackton's Vitagraph Film Company situated in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn.

At Vitagraph she co-starred in a series of comedies with John Bunny and later, in at least one film, Flora Finch. Along with the likes of Max Linder, Augustus Carney, and Bert Williams, Bunny and Finch were among the first widely known film comedians, in addition as well (in their case) to being one of the movie's earliest "fatty and skinny" comedy team. As well as providing her with encouragement and a warm welcome, Mabel received from them instruction on how to act and appear in front of a film camera. Most notably they imparted to her the understanding that in films *natural* and understated expression were often more effective than the more loud and formalistic gesturing; the latter approach, not infrequently encountered in stage and film acting of the day, and generally attributed to the influence of the ideas of French drama theorist François Delsarte.⁸

In most of her Vitagraph shorts, Mabel plays "Betty," an essentially well behaved, yet somewhat lively and mischievous, girl whose calculated pranks cause all sorts of vexation to Bunny's bumbling, typically distracted and upset, stodgy codger. These are more refined comedies compared to the ludicrous, farce brand of film that would become Mabel's stock and trade, and were favorably received. That Vitagraph cast Mabel as a comedienne reveals that it

⁶ *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 17, 1924, "Mabel Normand's Own Life Story!" Chapter 1, by Mabel Normand as told to Chandler Sprague.

⁷ Mabel, along with friends Anna Q. Nilsson and Alice Joyce, even did some "runway" modeling; that is appearing in fashion shows for purposes of displaying new clothing designs. See, for example, a nostalgic report of the same; also at *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 17, 1924; where a photo of the three doing exactly that is included.

⁸ Bunny was one of the first to explicitly expound on this topic; see Frances Agnew's 1913 *Motion Picture Acting*.

did not require Mack Sennett to initially spot or attempt to make most of her talent in this respect, and almost immediately after hitting the screen she began to gain public interest as is shown in "letters to the editor" of that time.

However, not desiring to remain teamed with the aging Bunny (and who, incidentally, would die only a few years later in 1915) and, at the same time, on the continued entreaties of Mack Sennett, she left Vitagraph and returned to Biograph in the Fall of 1911.⁹ Sennett, an Irish-Canadian originally from Richmond, Quebec whose family had moved to Connecticut when he was young, had started out as an ironworker. Yet gifted with a sonorous bass, he had dreams of working in musical theater. His voice subsequently landed him a place in the chorus of stage shows and less respectable burlesque in New York City. Working in these part time jobs acquired for him a number of valuable theatre, and later film, contacts. From initially being employed as an extra at Biograph, he proceeded to work there as an actor, then as sometime-scenario writer, and finally director, sometimes employed in the capacity of all three.

Although she was given substantial parts in several of his one-reelers, Griffith was in no hurry to employ Mabel regularly. One of the reasons for this is that her tendency to be more joking than was normal for his players ill suited the poetic and more serious sorts of films he was interested in producing.¹⁰ Evidently also, since she was popular with his other actresses, he felt that her more carefree disposition might have an undesirable influence on them if he gave her too much prominence as a performer. So that by downplaying Mabel, Griffith, it might with reason be said, was prudently suppressing a potential distracting influence on his female players. Meanwhile, Sennett, in the background, and more disposed to comedy, was forming plans of his own to make expanded use of her talents and abilities.

Even at early on as this, Mabel was thought well of and even looked up to by a number of aspiring actresses just entering the business. Griffith's first wife, Linda Arvidson, in her personal history, *When the Movies Were Young*, tells of two such -- Dorothy Gish and Gertie Bambrick. "They had an idol they would emulate and wanted to be alone where they could practice. The idol was Mabel Normand. Could they be like Mabel Normand, well, then they would be satisfied with life. So bright, so merry, so pretty; oh, could they just become like Mabel!... Yes, Mabel Normand was the most wonderful girl in the world, the most beautiful and the best sport. Others have thought of Mabel as these two youngsters did. Daring, reckless, and generous hearted to a fault, she was like a frisky colt that would take no bridle. The quiet and seemingly demure little thing is the one who generally gets away with things."¹¹

While then he had good reason to discourage her from becoming a role model (if not an actual rival to his own influence of his female company members), Griffith had little to complain of when it came to her effectiveness as a dramatic actress, and her Biograph films *The Squaw's Love*, *The Mender of Nets*, and *The Eternal Mother*, all of which Griffith directed himself, are miniature masterpieces for which she shares credit. So much so that some audiences took it for granted that she was one of Biograph's leading players even though she was at yet only an apprentice and budding actress just learning the trade. Many of the mannerisms and the technique she first utilized she acquired under Griffith's tutelage and direction. Indeed, it was out of this Biograph training that there soon bloomed forth nuances in gesture and expression which before long gradually became her own. Whether as a love smitten Indian maid sabotaging enemy canoes; or the *other woman* taking responsibility for her guilt; or a dying mother leaving her child, her expressions and emoting, while occasionally heightened with conventional stage mannerisms, are, nevertheless, moving and credible. She sincerely feels what she is doing, and in a manner relatively free of artifice and affectation, and will slide and glide from one emotion to another with ease and in attuned complement to her fellow players; who seem not a little energized by her presence. In this way, an astonishing

⁹ Mabel later spoke of first playing a bit part in a Kalem film, the same company where her model friend Alice Joyce worked. See *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 24, 1924.

¹⁰ Griffith himself had also made comedies but until Sennett started directing humorous films were the odd exception at Biograph.

¹¹ While with the company in California, Mabel was formally chaperoned by Mrs. Charlotte Pickford.

amount of feeling is extracted from the most fleeting of moments. Yet as somber and serious as she could be, there is sometimes this bubbly warmth and good humor about her that only with difficulty is she able to suppress.

Added to this were her athleticism and swimming abilities and which found their way into many of her films, beginning with those made at Biograph. In *The Squaw's Love*, for instance, she portrays an Indian maid who, in an intrepid act of desperation endangers her life to save her paramour, an Indian brave. Besides swimming in a cold, rushing stream, the role required her to engage in a hand-to-hand struggle and then be thrown off a steep cliff into the water below. The filming of that particular scene, by the way, is one of the very first times that multiple cameras were used on a single sequence (though, regrettably, only one of these ended up being used in the film itself.) As would often later be the case, no double was used, and she shows herself given to boldness even to the point of risking serious physical injury.

In January 1912, Griffith took the main Biograph company, including Mabel, to Los Angeles for filming where the company would remain, as was usual for such trips, up until about June or July (arriving back in New York by or before the end of the latter month.)¹² Immediately after filming *The Mender of Nets* (in mid January), Mabel was transferred to the newly created Biograph comedy unit headed by Sennett. The latter by this time, in addition to being a full-time director, was now her chum and sweetheart. When one considers the prominent role she subsequently played as Keystone's main star attraction until Arbuckle and Chaplin came along, there is little doubt that the idea for the Biograph comedy unit came from Sennett but who built the idea around the conception Mabel's being the comedies' main star attraction – which she in fact was. Though Sennett and Mace in 1912, and then Sterling in 1913 did run close seconds in popularity to Mabel, that all her male co-players of that early time were, by comparison, less frequently mentioned in film promotion and reviews essentially confirms this. Mabel, therefore, was essential to the initial success of the Biograph and Keystone comedies. It might be argued that Sennett could conceivably have used another pretty girl in the headline capacity in her place had she not been somehow available for him. While not entirely implausible, the difference as it was is that Mabel possessed an initiative and sense of audacity and adventure essential to Keystone's development. And in taking on very risky stunts – not least of which taking on the role of centerpiece for a fledgling film comedy enterprise -- she became a decisive factor in setting the tone for and maintaining the impetus of the *harum-scarum* type of action sequences that later burgeoned in the twenties. Although Sennett could and did pressure her in the direction of thrills and daring, he would otherwise, to say the least, have had a daunting challenge in finding someone else to carry out that primary vision as diligently and enthusiastically as Mabel proved she could.

Sennett's Biograph comedies, in their more fresh and simple quality, today sometimes make better viewing than many of the Keystone films. In part, this may be attributed to Griffith's more staid and humanizing influence that in some ways can be seen as tempering both Sennett and Mabel's boisterous and frolicking natures. One of these, *A Dash Through the Clouds*, has Mabel aloft in an aeroplane; off to rescue her chewing-gum peddling boyfriend, played by Fred Mace, from some incensed natives hailing from the "Mexican quarter." Although the close ups were done on the ground, in the long-shots she is seen actually taking to the skies in a Curtiss-Pusher aircraft, flying over a rural hinterland in what is now part of urban Los Angeles. A funny, albeit brief, moment comes at the end of the reel where, with matter-of-fact aplomb, Mabel snubs her cowardly beau; having retrieved him from the irate natives. Waving her hand and tossing her nose up in the air, she leaves him to take off into the skies with her new boyfriend, the aviator. What is of particular note is Mabel's making amusing and giving character to an otherwise tenuous comic story by means of a coquettish mannerism that reveals *both* her antic feistiness and affectionate warmth.

¹² See Mary Pickford reminiscences of the Griffith company at that time (including some remarks on Mabel) found in "New Year's Eve on a Train," *The Times-Democrat*, Lima, Ohio, Jan. 2, 1916 (evening edition.)

Other comedies she made for Biograph in 1912 and which stand out from among the rest are *The Diving Girl*; *Hot Stuff*; *Oh, Those Eyes*; *The Brave Hunter*; *The Fickle Spaniard*; *Tomboy Bessie*; and *Katchem Kate*.

Kalton C. Lahue, in his *Kops and Custards* makes the observation: “(Mabel’s) success was in the fact that unlike other comedienues of the time, she did not strain for effects. They came naturally by an infinite number of tiny shifting facial expressions that more than adequately conveyed what she was trying to tell her audiences. In this respect, her bubbling personality dominated her on-screen performance.” Being usually better than the material she had to work with, and of imaginatively improving on such with improvisation and an inborn comedic flair are some of what made Mabel so successful on screen, and we see this method and approach forming itself very early on.

The Keystone Comedies

While there are conflicting versions respecting how the Keystone Film Company got started, it exceeds our purpose to adjudicate between them here. Suffice to say that starting near the end of 1911, and probably before going West for January-June shooting with Biograph, Sennett made arrangements which were finalized in April 1912 to form it in cooperation with Adam Kessel and Charles Baumann of the already well established New York Motion Picture Company – and who, as majority shareholders, were his bosses. It was then sometime in late June or late July¹³ that Keystone was formally outfitted and brought together, with filming starting that summer in New York. Then in August, Keystone’s troupe, at that time consisting of Sennett, Mabel, Ford Sterling, and Henry Lehrman, went to Los Angeles and took charge of the old Bison film facility there.¹⁴ Fred Mace, and who was already in Los Angeles working for Ince’s Bison Company,¹⁵ subsequently joined as well.

Somewhere beforehand, Sennett had managed to convince Mabel to relinquish her reliable and steady job at Biograph to come work for his nascent company. He later ascribed this impracticality and seeming rashness on her part to naiveté. Yet Griffith’s reluctance to make too much of her and a desire for more freedom and autonomy, not to mention an already comfortable working relationship with Sennett, were presumably factors as well.

Griffith himself, while far from being elated over Sennett’s prospective idea of comedy for the masses (and, as well, probably not too pleased at seeing so many players leaving Biograph more or less all at once) was, nonetheless, ostensibly amicable and gentlemanly about their departure; no doubt recognizing that Sennett and company were an ambitious force in motion that simply could not be held back. And although usually glossed over by film historians, Griffith commendable forbearance and Sennett’s enterprising attitude should perhaps be seen as one of Hollywood’s finer moments; for how awkward or souring might things have turned out had Griffith forced Sennett and the rest to leave under the cloud of his disapproval. Sennett owed Griffith a great deal, but we never hear of the latter ever taking credit or making mention of the fact. He was doing comedy for Griffith two years before Mabel came to Biograph, and not a few Keystone films were, at least in part, inspired by or else partial remakes of (strange as it may sound) *Griffith* directed comedies. Compare, for instance, the Griffith film *The Gibson Goddess* (1909) with *Mabel’s Lovers* (1912); *Those Awful Hats* (1909) with *Mabel’s Dramatic Career* (1913); *A Politician’s Love Story* (1909) with *Making a Living* (1914).

For Sennett, the Keystone films were first and foremost moneymakers. Unlike Griffith who had hailed from the legitimate theater, he had practically no interest in creating a meaningful artistic vision. In fact, most all of the innovative ideas attributed to him, such as the

¹³ July Fourth was later given as the official date

¹⁴ Bison was another of the New York Motion Picture company’s film making outfits. As Bison specialized in Westerns, so Keystone was to specialize in comedies.

¹⁵ Or else Laemmle’s IMP, according to another version.

gag surrounding a group of bumbling cops, could be seen in comedies of European filmmakers prior to Keystone's inception. Some scholars have attempted to read great social messages in the films. Yet if such are there, they are scarcely purposeful on Sennett's part; while at the same time much of the characters, dilemmas, and ridicule employed in his comedies are as old as Aesop. The extraordinarily influential Bathing Beauties were unique to Keystone. But even that idea, at least according to Fred Balshofer, came from Henry Lehrman, not Sennett.¹⁶ And, as noted earlier, most of what Sennett knew about film making itself came from working with Griffith; which shows in his films. Sennett's prowess and somewhat serendipitous achievement rather lay in his collecting together these ideas and methods from others, and putting them all together in one unheard of package. He was keen to innovation, if not so innovative himself, and perhaps more importantly, usually had a knack for spotting comic talent -- if not for keeping and developing it. For it was his players and gag creators, not so much his directors or cameramen, who made his films the more popular and better remembered comedies of that very early era. His biggest mistake ultimately was too often taking these talents for granted, and (so it is averred by contemporaries) unnecessarily hampering their individual creativity -- this, ostensibly, in the interest of company centralization and uniformity.¹⁷

Under each title-heading of a factory short it explicitly read "farce-comedy," and the Keystone comedies, it should be noted, are not technically comedies, but farces, where the ludicrous replaces the realistic, and preposterousness of individual incident overshadows the subtlety of a believable narrative. 4 to 6 or possibly more short films are what usually made up a theater program at this early time. However, when features started arriving, short films became more like appetizers (or occasionally desserts) to the main course, and thus took on a subordinate status with the big stars gradually desiring, or else compelled by circumstances, to move over to features.

The camera work sets, and production values of the Keystone shorts are sometimes extraordinary for their crudeness and simplicity even for their time; especially when one considers what had been accomplished elsewhere in these areas by then. A good illustration of the latter is the comedies put out by the Lumière company in France, particularly those of Max Linder; which conspicuously influenced Sennett; look at, for example, at *Max Plays at Drama* (*Max et Jane veulent faire du theater*, 1911) compared to Keystone's *The Ragtime Band* (1913). Notwithstanding, Keystone's comedians were frequently able to rise above the restrictions of the material and props they had to work with (not to mention sometimes Sennett himself), and bring about exciting and mirth filled, if not always or so much laugh provoking, films. There is typically a unaffected merriment and natural jollity to them, and it is perhaps these qualities overall, rather than the humor outright, which better earns for them their more lasting merit.¹⁸

Not counting *Mickey*, it was in the better of the Biograph and Keystone shorts that Mabel's screen personality was most winsome and effulgent. That she was unencumbered by those personal misfortunes and health problems which would subsequently debilitate and ultimately destroy her was obviously one factor contributing to this. Yet, in addition, it was an especially ambitious and pioneering time. And with almost each new movie being filmed, some little history was being made; nor were the early filmmakers ignorant of or oblivious to this.

¹⁶ Gloria Swanson, who at one time had been a bathing beauty herself, states: "We were the movies' answer to the Ziegfeld girls." *The Keystone Krowd* by Stuart Oderman p. 41.

¹⁷ Of course, Sennett did have a good sense of humor, and was not without his own distinctive ideas of what made for good comedy. For one exposition of these see "Mack Sennett-Laugh Tester," by Harry Carr, *Photoplay* May 1915.

¹⁸ On the other hand, silent film historian David Robinson argues that Sennett was among the leaders and innovators when it came to splicing and cutting films, stating: "Comedy demanded a new approach to editing. The dignified proscenium set-ups favored by drama directors in 1912, were no good to the comedians, who had to be caught where they fell. The camera had to be agile; the editing had to keep up with the jokes. Not only in America, but in Europe as well directors were astonished and stimulated by the speed and rhythm and balance of the Keystone comedies. The work of such a director as Maurice Tourneur, who came to America in 1914, reveals a sophisticated style of cutting which had almost certainly been learnt not from Griffith, but from Sennett." *Hollywood in the Twenties* p. 97.

Among Mabel's very first starring Keystone vehicles, and one of the few earliest Keystones to survive, is a split-reeler entitled *The Water Nymph*; shot in the New York-New Jersey area. It is a re-doing of the successful *Diving Girl* that she made at Biograph under Sennett's direction. Adorned in black tights, she is the premier Sennett bathing-beauty, "the beautiful diving Venus" (states a trade ad);¹⁹ a sort of kittenish version of the then buxom screen idol Annette Kellerman. Stunning some spectators as she takes dives off the boardwalk, Ford Sterling, as Sennett's father is seen fatuously trying to flirt with her, much to Mack and Mabel's bemusement. The film isn't terribly much, but it and others of that time, inspired by and hearkening to the Lumière comedies, did set a standard of light, comic sensuality that introduced to the public that grouping of would-be sweethearts and antagonists which were to become a key ingredient to many a Keystone scenario.

From diving girl, Mabel went on to play damsels, sweethearts, tomboys, school teachers and debutantes. Yet not unlike the way Chaplin invented his tramp character, Keaton his "Stone Face," and Lloyd his bespectacled "Harold," she concocted and devised her own special persona "Mabel."²⁰ Now in order to avoid any misunderstanding, let's here note that "Mabel" with quotation marks refers to Mabel the comic creation, not necessarily Mabel Normand the person; though it's easy to see how the two might be confused for not infrequently they overlap.

"Mabel" was an irrepressible mad-cap who, in various films, rode fast horses bare-back, went up in hot-air balloons, was tied to train tracks, engaged in brick throwing fights with villains, got dragged by a rope out of a drained and muddy lake, and rescues her would be rescuers. While these kinds of action thrills were to be found in serials such as Ruth Roland's, it was a bit different to be combining these with overt comedy. Initially, Mabel hesitated little in putting her own safety on the line for purposes of providing others a thrill or laugh. And, for a while at least, a good gag or thrill was worth the risk. But injuries from these stunts later on understandably jaded and quelled such enthusiasm.

Screen history's first thrown pie-in-the-face is accredited by Sennett and other Keystone members, to Mabel, but, not surprisingly, the gag appears at least as early as the 1905 Ben Turpin film *Mr. Flip* (it is Turpin as a flirt who gets the pie in the face); so that the story of Mabel out of hand inventing it simply isn't true. Minta Durfee, one of the Keystone actresses later recalled an incident in which Mabel "tossed" a blueberry pie at a prop man who had made a pass, and possibly it was on the basis of this incident that later attributions were originally made.²¹

The earliest film in which pie throwing appears in a surviving film of Mabel's is *The Ragtime Band* where two pies are thrown. Rather pointedly, one of those to "get it" is Mabel herself. This is very like her in that in this and other comic situations, she's just as capable of *taking it as of dishing it out*. Other 1913 comedies with her also of special note generally are *Bangville Police*, *A Muddy Romance*, *Barney Oldfield's Race for a Life*, *A Strong Revenge*, *The Speed Kings*, *Mabel's New Hero* and *Zuzu, the Band Leader*.

Somewhat surprisingly to Sennett and company, who understandably were not so very sure and confident of their initial efforts, the Keystone films were quite popular and sold well; so much so that soon some of Sennett's players began insisting on augmented salaries. Not able to come to terms of his liking, veteran Fred Mace left the company in April 1913. Shortly afterward, Ford Sterling, Keystone's then top male comic, was threatening to walk out to try and make it on his own; which he afterwards did. Both Mace and Sterling would afterward have grounds to regret their decisions; for both of their solo efforts ended in failure. Not only was this unfortunate for them, but it was also bad for Sennett since it encouraged in

¹⁹ *The Moving Picture News*, Aug. 8, 1912.

²⁰ Presumably Mabel chose her own outfits and costumes, as Chaplin and the rest came to do.

²¹ See *Classic Images magazine*, No. 70, co-written with Stuart Oderman

him the misguided notion that his stars could not make it successfully without him -- an attitude that, by constraining the company's creativity, only inhibited Keystone's greater success.

It was amid this atmosphere of transition and employee dissatisfaction in late 1913 that it became necessary for Sennett to find and hire a replacement to make up for his impending loss of Mace and Sterling.²²

Charlie and Mabel

In September 1913, a new player was signed onto Keystone in the person of English music hall comedian Charles Chaplin. Whether it was Adam Kessel and Charles Baumann, or Keystone stock holder Harry Aitken, or Mack and Mabel or just Mabel alone who discovered him for films, it's not so easy to say since sources again conflict.²³ In his pictorial autobiography *My Life in Pictures*, Chaplin states that Sennett came backstage after a performance of the Karno Company at the Empress theater in Los Angeles and casually offered him a job with Keystone. Whatever of the particulars of his being spotted, Keystone came to a major turning point with his arrival in January 1914. Because the stage comic had no previous experience with movies, Sennett didn't let him perform before the camera until February; which is to say until after he thought Chaplin had enough time to get acquainted with Keystone's production methods. Then at last he was starred in *Making a Living*, under the supervision of Henry Lehrman, one of Sennett's more able and creative, if less than loyal and devoted, directors.

After taking in the results of Chaplin's first endeavor, or so the story goes, Sennett was not pleased. Perhaps beginning to sense Chaplin's highly independent nature, he felt as if he'd made a big mistake and was all but ready to get rid of him. Mabel saw things differently, however, arguing in Chaplin's behalf that he should be kept on; to which Sennett reluctantly agreed.

Yet problems continued to arise. With each passing day, things seemed to only get worse between Sennett and his would-be star hopeful. Being new to films, and a social outsider to his Keystone peers, Chaplin's authoritative and (for them) alien manners made it difficult to accept him as just one of the boys. Further, some were perhaps jealous of his talent and uncomfortable with the competition he posed. Though Chaplin does specifically mention kindnesses from Ford Sterling, of all the people at the studio, Mabel was the only one then who would befriend, and joke around with him off the set. Nor was Chaplin the only one at Keystone to benefit from her moral and material support in the face of Sennett's discouragement or intimidation; and Roscoe Arbuckle, about a year previous to this, had benefited similarly.

It is regrettable, yet perhaps understandable, that the more experienced filmmakers and actors on the lot were reluctant to listen to suggestions from such an obvious novice to the medium. This was, of course, very frustrating to Charlie because even then he had some good, even brilliant, ideas. Yet his unique personal vision and individualistic approach could not help but conflict with Sennett's dictatorial methods and ensemble style.

Each director assigned to Chaplin wound up having some problem with him or else he with them; till Chaplin himself almost came to the point of quitting. Fed up, Sennett decided to have Mabel direct his next film, *Mabel at the Wheel*. At this, Chaplin felt much insulted. For as much as he, like all the rest, felt favorably toward her, he could not, or so he later claimed,

²² As Wendy Warwick White points out in her biography of Ford Sterling, there is good reason to suspect that Chaplin was originally contacted by Sennett as an intended replacement for Mace, not, as some have understandably surmised, Sterling.

²³ In an interview with Stuart Oderman, Dorothy Davenport asserts that Mack hired Chaplin on Mabel's so-say, even though Sennett was none too sure of and also afraid to direct him, and Chester Conklin told Oderman: "Charlie was Mabel's prize." *Keystone Krowd* pp. 53, 82.

countenance this girl, years younger than himself, directing him in his films, and sure enough disagreements subsequently ensued during filming and tempers flared on the set. Yet rather than Mabel herself, Chaplin no doubt resented what he thought was Sennett's humiliating him this way. After the first day's shooting of *Mabel at the Wheel*, he and Sennett met up in his dressing room. According to Chaplin's version, Sennett told him, in no uncertain terms, that he was to do as he was told or leave. The undaunted star replied that he had earned his living before and could do so again if he had to; that all he wanted to do was to make films to a higher standard. Sennett, in response, said nothing, and upon leaving the room slammed the door behind him.²⁴

Not long after, word came from Kessel and Baumann of the growing demand for Chaplin's films. As a result, Sennett forthwith abandoned his reported antipathy toward him, even to the point of becoming friendly. Soon Chaplin was being allowed to direct himself, try out some his new ideas, and more freely devote himself to what professionally he most came to care about. Although he was not then aware of the reason for Sennett's about face, the two, at any rate, mended their differences, and work at the studio proceeded at a much smoother pace than before.

In the months ensuing, Chaplin and Mabel were once more reconciled and together they co-starred and directed each other in a series of one and two reels. To be candid, some of these comedies are rather poor, Keystone assembly-line product. On the other hand, a few, and allowing for the usual shortcomings of a Keystone production, are among the best things that Charlie and Mabel ever did. Of the at least ten shorts the two made together, *Caught in a Cabaret*, *A Gentleman of Nerve*, *Mabel's Married Life* and *His Trysting Place* are the most brilliant. Reportedly conceived and directed by Mabel herself, *Mabel's Busy Day*, though not as satisfying as these others, is interesting for other reasons. Behind the silly vignette about a little hot-dog vendor who is constantly stolen from and taken advantage by fans at a sporting event is perhaps a portrayal (intended or not) of something going on in Mabel's real life. Be that as it may, *Mabel's Busy Day* was uncannily prophetic of things to come.

Charlie and Mabel make a funny and elf-like pair, when playing struggling spouses, masher and maid, or suitor and coquette. Though the comedies frequently found them in many a wild slapstick situation, there are occasions where the two are actually quite tender and sweet together. This is especially true when seated side by side, as called for by the story; since it was these instances which gave them the best opportunity of making use of more sensitive facial expressions; with *Caught in a Cabaret* and *A Gentleman of Nerve* being good illustrations of this. In the latter, the two sit together in the stands of an auto-racing track. Having defended her from an obnoxious cad in the grandstand, Charlie tries then to steal a kiss after re-seating themselves. She shakes her head, as if to say it wouldn't be right. He then glumly takes her hand and wistfully kisses it instead. Mabel, gazing sympathetically at him, then starts playfully tweaking his nose with the hand he's kissing.

How much Chaplin actually cared for her at the time is related by way of a little anecdote included in his autobiography. During a charity benefit being held at a San Francisco theater, the two were alone in a dressing room. Finding her "radiantly beautiful," he placed her wrap over her shoulders and kissed her; she then kissed him back. "We might have gone further," he writes, "but people were waiting." When he attempted to pursue the matter later, she told him she wasn't his type, nor he hers, thus ending what might have proved a very provocative romance. Despite the rejection, he in later years retained his fondness saying: "She was light hearted and gay, a good fellow, kind and generous; and everyone adored her."

²⁴ Rewatching the Chaplin/Mabel films one becomes more convinced that there was some romantic rivalry -- real or imagined -- between Sennett and Chaplin over Mabel, and I do think Sennett may have grown sour with Chaplin because he sensed that Mabel was perchance *too* fond of him; with Chaplin himself, to some unstated extent, infatuated with her. This would possibly explain why Chaplin was pointedly and repeatedly cast as a foolish or inept lover (e.g., "Mabel at the Wheel" and "Mabel's Married Life" -- either to dispel Sennett's misgivings or else to ridicule Chaplin himself in that light. "The Fatal Mallet" seems a blunt statement by Sennett that Mabel was, after all, his; and yet why make it in the first place? Perhaps Mabel then, and in turn Sennett, was why Chaplin ultimately had no choice but to leave Keystone -- Broncho Billy Anderson or no.

December 1914 saw the release of *Tillie's Punctured Romance*. While the film is overly long, certain of its episodes, such as the scene with Charlie and Mabel in the movie house, the party scene, and the no-holds-barred finale, contribute to making this film classic viewing. This is true aside from its star studded cast and distinction of being the first *feature length* comedy ever produced. While Marie Dressler, in this her very first screen appearance, was cast in the title role, it was Chaplin and Mabel, as the city slicker and his girlfriend, who probably give the film its most personable appeal -- though Marie, as a butt of most of the humor, is obviously a likable, good sport as well. The film's phenomenal box-office impacted Chaplin's career most, however; and not counting the short *Dough and Dynamite*, it was *Tillie* that first procured for him the wide spread acclaim he deserved.

Following *Tillie*, Chaplin began demanding raises in pay and greater independent control over his work. Finding his terms outrageous (as was to be expected by the frugal New York Motion Picture Company), the reaction of Sennett, Kessel and Baumann was to let him walk. Only later when Broncho Billy Anderson's Essanay signed Chaplin at a record amount did the latter realize the enormity of their mistake. Everyone on the lot then became sad at losing him recalled Keystone comedienne Minta Durfee many years later, but Mabel most of all.²⁵

Fatty and Mabel

In light of Chaplin's absence, Sennett paired Mabel and Roscoe Arbuckle for a new series of "Fatty and Mabel" comedies. Though the two had appeared together previously in several of Keystones (some of them, like *Mabel's New Hero* and *Those Country Kids* being quite good), the "Fatty and Mabel" series proper began shooting in January 1915.

As with Chaplin, Sennett, it is said, had had misgivings about Arbuckle's future in films when the hefty, yet light on his feet, newcomer (who just prior been singing in traveling stage shows) appeared at Keystone in early 1913. As well again also, it was only when Mabel persuaded him differently that Sennett changed his attitude. Whether this kind of intervention on her part was actually so decisive as to save Chaplin's and Arbuckle's careers at Keystone as asserted may perhaps be open to question. Yet it was, nevertheless, certainly significant in providing them much more latitude and encouragement than they otherwise would have had received from Sennett. Arbuckle was then given a lead part in one of the Keystones and, in no time, went on to become one of the most instantly recognizable, if also ill-fated, of silent film directors and comedians.

The "Fatty and Mabel" comedies are whimsical and charming, if zany little films; which in many ways are among the very best Keystone shorts. By 1915, the production quality of the Keystone films had improved considerably. While the slapstick and satirical edge were made use of in all their riotous glory, room was found to make the shorts more structured and sentimental. More frames were devoted to facial improvisation and character development: just what was needed to do proper justice to Mabel and Arbuckle's comic personalities. Perhaps best of all, it was now Arbuckle who was overseeing production rather than Sennett.

Having become celebrated stars by this time, Roscoe and Mabel seem more self-confident and assured, generally speaking, than in their earlier films. Together, they poke fun at the fortunes and foibles of a comically absurd couple: the petite pretty girl and her rotund, rumbustious boyfriend. Whether as innocent sweethearts, a confounded couple, or "spooning" spouses, Roscoe and Mabel made for a perfect comedic pair.

In *Fatty and Mabel's Simple Life*, a melodrama parody, the two play a couple of country kids whose childhood love is threatened by the greed of "Mabel's" father. One especially good moment worth noting here occurs when, in the course of eloping, she lets fall

²⁵ *The Keystone Krowd* p. 181.

an enormous trunk filled with her belongings. It comes tumbling down on Arbuckle, who, ascending the ladder to her room, is sent crashing through a living room window.

Fatty and Mabel at the San Diego Exposition, another short deserving particular remark, is one of those comedies where Sennett took his players and crew to a public event,²⁶ in this case the San Diego Exposition of 1915, and improvised a comedy. What little of a scenario there is involves “Fatty’s” flirting with Minta Durfee and some chubby Hawaiian hula-girls, while “Mabel,” jealously enraged, pursues him about the exposition grounds. The film is perhaps most remarkable for its overlapping of reality and fiction. On the one hand, the short is a vehicle to promote the exposition, and on the other a set piece Keystone comedy. She plays both her actual self and her character “Mabel,” while similarly Arbuckle plays both himself and “Fatty” – both interacting with the live crowd while portraying the otherwise usual characters in a typical Keystone farce.

Other films of the 1915 Fatty and Mabel series that merit mention include: *Mabel, Fatty and the Law*, *Mabel’s Wilful Way*, *Wished on Mabel*, and *Fatty and Mabel’s Married Life*. Lastly, we should note, is *That Little Band of Gold*. In it, there is a very brief, yet touching scene where “Fatty” and “Mabel” embrace at their wedding. Besides being sensitively played, the scene has a particularly sad and poignant quality when one reflects on the tragedies which were to later separately befall them.

In September of 1915, Mabel fell victim to a concussion that laid her up for weeks. Sennett’s publicity reported that the injury was the result of a thrown shoe that during filming accidentally struck her. Mabel, in a magazine interview said Roscoe accidentally sat on her head. Adela Rogers St. Johns asserts that the injury was the result of a failed suicide attempt that involved her jumping off a pier. She attributes this desperate act to Mabel’s disillusionment and despair over the break up of her engagement to Sennett and whom Mabel had found in bed with Mae Busch, purportedly one of Sennett’s “finds.”²⁷ Minta Durfee, on the other hand and probably the more trustworthy on this point, asserts that what actually happened was that when Mabel walked in on Sennett unannounced, Mae²⁸ blindly hurled a vase at an unknown, unwelcome visitor who turned out to be Mabel. The vase struck her in the head and caused her to bleed profusely.²⁹ Regardless of what actually took place, something very serious transpired which forever shattered her trust in Sennett -- at least as far as courtship and marriage were concerned. Much worse than this, of course, was Mabel’s receiving an injury that may have done permanent damage to her health.

Thereafter, all pleas for forgiveness on Sennett’s part fell on deaf ears. Though the incident was decisive in ending any hope of the two ever marrying, it would be unduly simplistic to view it as the sole reason for Mabel’s implacable disenchantment with him. Over time, other relevant factors became evident. As well romantic rivals to both that appeared, he was over ten years her senior and the kind of activities they enjoyed and interests they pursued were sometimes noticeably dissimilar; for example, contrast Sennett’s personal habits and coarseness of manner with Mabel’s growing intellectualism and later efforts at cultural refinement; that hers subsequent refusals to reconcile and settle down with him seem only practical and sensible.³⁰ And while much has been written about their romance, it is open to question how deeply Mabel actually felt toward him; for as much as has been said by

²⁶ Brent Walker notes that the first Sennett filmed outing at a public event was *A Would Be Shriner* (1912), a Biograph film; with *The Sleuths at the Floral Parade* (1913, Keystone) being a notable follow-up.

²⁷ Adela claims Mae was actually an old acquaintance of Mabel’s from Vitagraph. Recent research carried out by Mabel Normand archivist Marilyn Slater suggest that this was not in fact the case. For her exploration of Mae’s career, see: <http://looking-for-mabel.webs.com/maebusch.htm>

²⁸ Some question whether it was Mae, and not perhaps someone else, who was caught with Sennett and or hurled the vase. In fairness and in any case, we don’t know with any great certainty; so that some benefit of the doubt (i.e., “innocent until proven guilty”) is owed Mae Busch on this point. But that Mabel did at that time suffer some kind of head or other serious physical injury seems beyond doubt. My thanks to David Noakes, Mae Busch aficionado, for his raising and attempting to help clear up this point.

²⁹ “Fatty’s First,” by Minta Durfee and Stuart Oderman, *Classic Images* magazine, No. 70, and *Keystone Krowd* pp. 185-190.

³⁰ Constance Talmadge: “[Sennett was a] vulgar man who never offered Mabel any future or any indication of security. She just lived for today, and she never thought there would be a tomorrow.” *Keystone Krowd* p. 151.

contemporaries regarding their relationship, we have relatively little or no record of her own views on the subject.

Later that same year, in early December, it was reported again that she had suffered yet another accident, this time in an actual mishap on the set. Since the source of this information is Sennett publicity, it is hard to say whether the accident actually occurred or was simply a yarn concocted to explain the change that had taken place in Mabel. Whatever the case, the story stated that during the filming of a comedy with Chester Conklin, the airplane that she and Conklin were to fly in started taking off after Conklin inadvertently released the throttle. It crashed and exploded in flames. Fortunately, neither of the two comedians were seriously hurt; though both were laid up for several days.

Having suffered the break-up of her engagement, the concussion, and now this purported airplane misadventure, a drastic change came over Mabel; with the result that emotionally and physically she was never quite the same. Yet ironically and more tragically, these incidents were just the beginning of her troubles.

In a move to increase distribution and become more respectable, in July 1915 Sennett/Keystone (as part of the New York Motion Picture Company and which also included Reliance Motion Picture Corporation, and Majestic Motion Picture Company), and along with D.W. Griffith and Thomas Ince, joined the newly formed Triangle Picture Corporation headed by Harry E. and Roy Aitken, and who had been the owners of Mutual and which had been the distributor of Keystone's films. Two of the first films to be produced by the company were *My Valet*, and *Stolen Magic*, a three and two reel comedy respectively which starred casual yet debonair stage actor and comedian Raymond Hitchcock, Sennett (who also directed) and Mabel. Released in Oct. and Nov. 1915, *My Valet* and *Stolen Magic* turned out to be small hits. Though Hitchcock was the intended main bill, movie audiences also came away pleased with Mabel, and public interest in her increased. That same year, *Motion Picture Magazine* took a poll and she was voted best Female Comedian, along with Chaplin, chosen as best Male Comedian, and Mary Pickford best Leading Woman. Probably at no other time did her career look so very promising in public eyes than it did at this time.

Before leaving Sennett, as she eventually did, Mabel made a few more two and three reelers with and directed by Arbuckle. Filming in Santa Monica and then later Fort Lee, New Jersey where they could be away from Sennett's stultifying supervision, Roscoe and Mabel evinced how much even more effective as performers they could be if left to their own devices. *Fatty and Mabel Adrift*, *He Did and He Didn't*, and *The Bright Lights* are unlike any of their previous efforts together in that these shorts are very well thought-out and carefully conceived, with more elaborate camera work and costlier production values than at any time earlier. In *Fatty and Mabel Adrift* as newlyweds spending their first night together, the two suffer the watery wrath of a jealous and vengeful Al St. John. With the aid of some criminal associates and in the midst of a violent storm, he pushes their home -- with them in it -- into the sea! Once adrift, it's up to Luke the dog³¹ and the Keystone water police to come to their rescue. Mabel is herself is no little delightful as the simple minded bride whose home-made biscuits are hard as rock -- a gag³² repeated to good effect in films and television shows decades later.

Mickey

Despite what had been their romantic relationship, Sennett had been working Mabel to the limit at Keystone from day one; while at the same time taking advantage of her inexperience with big money to pay her at a salary much lower than a star of her magnitude was entitled to. His reason for doing so may have been based on the idea that when he finally married her he would be providing for her; nor was Mabel being treated worse than any one

³¹ Arbuckle's own dog in real life and whom he had named after former Biograph and later Keystone director, Wilfred Lucas.

³² The same is known to have been used previously in the Biograph short "Her First Biscuits" (1909); with Florence Lawrence as the overly-confident maiden cook.

else among the players in this respect. Yet in addition to limiting her wages, his rigid control of production cloyed her creatively, as had been the case with so many of his best Keystone players. So notwithstanding what's been said elsewhere and though we have no reason to think Sennett didn't actually mean well, Mabel had as many, or more, professional grounds, as she might have had personal ones, to be dissatisfied with him. Not so surprisingly then, she left the studio in early 1916 -- with Arbuckle, as well, following her just a few months afterwards.

Sennett was initially bitter, and behaved as if he could easily replace her with Gloria Swanson or someone else. However, when trade headlines stated that she was going to work for Thomas Ince, and who had reportedly promised Mabel her own studio, he scrambled. With Adam Kessel's permission and backing, he went so far as to generously offer her her own film company, including a studio facility of her very own. This she happily agreed to, and it was thus, in April 1916, the short lived Mabel Normand Feature Film Company came into existence.

As ostensible studio head, Mabel now had the power to chose her own material and people. For director of her first film with the company, she first selected James Young (husband of silent star Clara Kimball Young.) When Young didn't work out to her liking (this was in June 1916), J. Farrell McDonald, assisted by Arvid Gillstrom, was her next choice. Yet finding them also unsuitable also, they too were dismissed. She then finally settled on 22 year old F. Richard Jones. Sennett wasn't all too pleased about this prospect since Jones had, up to that time, only directed one and two reel Keystone films. Yet Mabel had her way; which was just as well and her choice could hardly have been better. Not only did Jones go on to prove himself very much up to the task, but in succeeding years, he would direct more Sennett feature films with her, while also becoming instrumental in the early success of Hal Roach's Laurel and Hardy and Our Gang comedies. For her cast, Mabel brought in several friends and Keystone co-workers, including Minta Durfee and Minnie Devereaux; former Keystone director, George "Pops" Nichols. In addition there was Wheeler Oakman in the part of the leading man and Lew Cody as the villain.

Mickey, although not without its shortcomings, is a most unique and for some precious film. Resembling in no small way the kind of dramas Mary Pickford had done a year or or two earlier, for example *Tess of the Storm Country* (1914) and *Rags* (1915), its story centers on a puckish girl from the wild mountains and backwoods of California who is sent East by her loving, if simple minded, step-parents to live with her high society relatives. Besides the new environment and lifestyle she finds herself in, Mickey is forced to contend with two quite different suitors: one, a brave and thoughtful gentleman; the other, a wily and conniving rake -- played by Oakman and Cody respectively. Though the comedy and melodrama overlap, most of the film's comic moments occur in regard to Mickey's frontier life and her adjusting to the world of society's wealthy. Its melodramatic aspects are played out in the love and action scenes with the two suitors.

Although the plot is at times a bit meandering and haphazard, these weaknesses are more than counterbalanced by *Mickey's* jaunty pace and Mabel's *combined* comic and dramatic virtuosity. As Chaplin's tramp embodied the "little guy" who tries to live by his wits in a frequently changing and not always friendly world, Mabel's Mickey did something not so dissimilar for the "little gal." Though later events made it impossible for Mabel to ever develop her character anywhere near to the level that the tramp reached, in *Mickey* (allowing for illness suffered in the latter part of filming), she maintains a level of humor and pathos worthy of her former co-star; and the film despite the considerable lapse of years still has the power to cheerfully entrance and amuse like few others. Besides Mabel, the persons responsible for making it all happen are a believable cast, and F. Richard Jones' inspired directing. Rather than make her personality suit the film, he strove to make the film suit her personality. As he himself put it, "I try to draw out the individual personalities of the players. And for this reason

I never act out any of the play for them. As we pay for personality, why not develop it rather than endeavor to work it into something else.”³³

Whether because (as later reported by Sennett) distributors didn’t like it or due to unpaid bills, *Mickey* stayed on the shelf for about a year after its completion in 1917. Mabel, in the meantime, having grown weary of the delays and business shenanigans, had signed a five-year contract with mogul Samuel Goldwyn. Yet when *Mickey* was finally brought forth to the public in early December 1918, it became an almost immediate sensation. Its plucky optimism and playful innocence, backed by some smart promotion, had a tremendous appeal to war weary America. It became, as Sennett termed it, “the mortgage lifter,” and overtime (including re-releases) grossed huge sums, ranking it as one of the most successful films of its era in that category. Although many were made rich by the film, Mabel, because of the Byzantine dealing going on among the producers, wasn’t one of them. Neither, as it turned out, did Sennett himself reap much benefit; since he wound up losing most of his holdings in the film to the Aitken brothers.³⁴

The Goldwyn Films

By the time she was signed with Goldwyn’s newly formed production company in July 1917, a strange transformation had come over Mabel. And though she retained most of her good looks, much of her pep and athleticism was gone, and as years went by she became wan and worn out, ostensibly as a result of bouts of both illness and, by drug abuse. The drug use, somewhat like Wallace Reid’s, was medical in origin and had started with her taking medication to remedy the pain caused from her head injury and other illness. Minta Durfee spoke on this topic in an interview conducted by Hollywood archivist and historian Don Schneider:

“And that is why it is so mean of people to make remarks about her, because I’m telling you, I know this! That she never loved any other man in the world but Mack Sennett. And at the ending of her life, after she had been struck on the head by this Mae Busch, and she had refused to go back into the studio again, because she already had her wedding dress ready to marry, and this woman came and was with us and no one liked her when she came, this Mae Busch, and then at the end of her life, when she finally became tubercular, and I worked in, and played the heavy and finished my four years contract in ‘Mickey’ -- and that little thing would have a hemorrhage of the lungs and then she would take a swig out of a bottle, to stop the bleeding, and the coughing, and do all of her own stunts, nobody ever did any stunts for her, and if you’ve seen ‘Mickey’ you’ll be amazed to see that girl sliding down, where she’d fallen, she’d have been not only killed but she’d been crushed to pieces -- from this mansion where we made ‘Mickey’ over on Western and 24th Street -- and that day, in the morning, she and I were talking, she said, ‘Oh, I better take my goop,’ -- she always called it ‘goop,’ ‘Because I feel like I’m gonna have a little hemorrhage.’ ‘Well,’ I said, ‘Don’t do your work, don’t do that scene today, do something else dear.’ And she said, ‘Oh, no, that’s the way the schedule goes. No, I’ll do it.’”³⁵

To those who saw her after these accumulated setbacks to her health, her appearance and voice had changed. Very young as she still was, all but vanished from her dusky eyes and smiling countenance were the boundless gaiety and high spirits of previous years.

Besides her severe coughing spells, and the effects of reported fast living, it has come to light in Betty Fussell’s *Mabel: Hollywood’s First I-Don’t-Care Girl*, that, in consequence of

³³ *Fifty Great American Silent Films*, by Anthony Slide and Edward Wagenknecht, p. 99.

³⁴ ³⁴ Kessell and Baumann had ended up selling their New York Moton Picture Company holdings to the Aitkens; who, by means of which, then acquired the rights to *Mickey*. *Mickey*’s profits then went to paying off the large debts Triangle subsequently found itself saddled with. Although the Triangle Corporation proved a business failure, while it lasted it served as a prototype for the studio system that of course later became a standard part of movie making in Hollywood.

³⁵ Don Schneider interview with Minta Durfee transcript, Reel 3A, July 21, 1974.

an affair with Goldwyn, she allegedly became pregnant and had a miscarriage.³⁶ In short, all these problems and misfortunes, for obvious reasons, had a pernicious impact on her health; and help to explain what had happened to her. This said, there is certainly much more that we *don't* know about all this than what we do know, and it would be not a little rash to summarily jump to conclusions about what most brought her to this pass.

Although Goldwyn it is said tried to tame her wild habits and smooth off her rough edges, Mabel seemed to have jettisoned some of her earlier diligence and discipline. Eating ice cream for breakfast, playing practical jokes and partying long into the night were only some of her reported antics. It was not unusual for her to often show up late on the set of a film she was working on, and which upset Goldwyn. She was, however, reputed to be one of his most lucrative stars, and for a while her box-office contributions would seem to have more than compensated him for any inconveniences otherwise.

Only a small handful of her sixteen Goldwyn films survives; these include *The Floor Below* (1918), *When Doctors Disagree* (1919), *What Happened to Rose* (1921), and *Head Over Heels* (1922). Contemporary reviewers usually gave Mabel's performances high marks. The photographic quality of the Goldwyn films was superior to the early and late films she made with Sennett. Still, for the most part, the critics apparently found the films as vehicles for her silly and unsatisfying. Though there was enough in them to keep them marketable with general audiences, the critics' assessments were generally correct. In a *New York Times* footnote review for *Upstairs*, for instance, the reviewer writes, "Mabel, under the direction of Victor L. Schertzinger does some of her best pantomimic work. She takes the part of a kitchen drudge who is lured upstairs to the dancing room of a gay hotel. She is in trouble most of the time, and most of her troubles are laughable. There is not enough in this farce, however, to make all of its five or six reels entertaining."

The independent minded, at times inexplicably eccentric, and "Sennett-free" Mabel of this period was presumably not what the movie going public preferred. At least this is what biographers and historians, with some justification, are wont to assert. In any event, when Goldwyn's company went under in a takeover, Mabel was forced to leave the studio, as was ultimately Goldwyn himself.

Before the eventual collapse, Goldwyn, contracted with Sennett to have Mabel do the film *Molly O'*; an opportunity Sennett the while had been waiting in the wings for. It was his intention to play up the nostalgia by bringing back the more down-to-earth, less flighty Mabel of the Goldwyn period. F. Richard Jones directed; using a script (ostensibly) put together by Sennett, who took particular care and pride in the project. Advertising read: "You remember Mickey -- here's the same trio back again in a picture greater than Mickey!" Its cast included Jack Mulhall, George Nichols, Jacqueline Logan, and Lowell Sherman.

Molly O' was well received, both by audiences and critics alike, and definitely rates as one of her best features. Sometime in the early 1990's it was rediscovered in the Gosfilmofund archive in Moscow, Russia, and about a decade later beautifully restored by the film department at UCLA. While it mostly acquits itself as an entertaining, and in its way even great, picture, this is as much due to Jones direction and the ensemble as a whole, as Mabel herself. And though she does shine nicely and handles herself competently in a few spots, her comedy and acting overall are not exceptional or such as to evoke superlatives. Most of the success of the film then, unlike most of Mabel's previous feature films, lies in the team effort of the cast, rather than a stand out performance on her part.

Scandal

"The mass ownership of a celebrity makes of a star a queen bee. Obeisances are offered her; she is accorded royal rank, but is, withal, a prisoner in a hive. She has no privacy, and if she

³⁶ The story originated with Julia Benson, and was subsequently passed on to Ms. Fussell by Stephen Normand.

insists upon a life of her own, she is despised and rejected. When she chooses to remain in seclusion, she must suffer innuendo, which, if cast upon a woman in everyday life, would bring shotguns to the shoulders of the pious.

“The mad desire of human beings to maul their idols has been described in all its pathological manifestations by crowd psychologists in terms of religious frenzy. Case histories abound in the cinema.”³⁷

In late September 1921, about a month before *Molly O's* intended release, Mabel's friend and former co-star Roscoe Arbuckle went on trial to face charges of rape and manslaughter in the death of actress Virginia Rappe, who had expired from internal injury following a party Arbuckle had held in the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco. Though he was afterward, and unanimously, acquitted of all charges in the last of his court trials (in March 1922), the scandal that ensued wiped out his successful career over night. Shock waves from the event reverberated throughout the industry; such that in his autobiography Buster Keaton, in his autobiography speaks of the event as “the day the laughter stopped.” Almost from its beginning, a debate existed between film makers versus church and welfare groups in determining who should have final say about what was or wasn't morally permissible in films and the culture movie stars inhabited and communicated from. In some respects this concern was well founded given the number of movie people whose lives did end in tragedy, and the effect these deaths might have on the public at large, particularly with regard to the values and behaviors of young people. On the other hand, the ones on whom the blame was laid were not always the ones who were guilty; and sometimes it was the most guilty who, from a position of feigned propriety and calculated self-interest, engineered blame of others who were actually innocent, or at least mostly innocent. The Arbuckle scandal then could be said to have been the fomenting into one horrific convulsion of these various forces, both the sincere, the crooked, and various shades in between (on both sides), which had already been vying with each other for creative control for some time. It has moreover been alleged that an animosity toward Hollywood had grown over time, and this out of a hitherto simmering resentment of the new class of super rich that the movies had created.

Sennett withheld *Molly O'* till the storm had some time to subside. Somewhat surprisingly, when the film was released near the end of October, it was a smashing box-office hit. The public welcomed back Mabel with enthusiastic and open arms. In response, Sennett promptly began work on a big budget production for her; a comedy and costume romance set in “Old California” (circa 1840's or 1850's) titled *Suzanna*.

On the night of February 1, 1922, during time off from filming *Suzanna*, Mabel went to visit Paramount director, William Desmond Taylor. Taylor, an ex-antique's dealer, ex-soldier, erudite scholar, and adventurer, was of Irish parentage, while possessed of a very English upbringing and education, and was one of the more learned and academically informed among the Hollywood community. They became good friends, and Taylor tutored her in, among other things, literature, psychology and philosophy (particularly aesthetics.) For her part, Mabel welcomed the sense of higher culture and refining influence he reflected while the reserved, much older Taylor found solace in her levity and sense of independence. Whether there was more to their relationship seems is not entirely clear; though there is some evidence to suggest something more personal than this did take place between them, based on a taped interview Mary Miles Minter gave to author Charles Higham in the 70's.³⁸ But beyond Minter's report there is much about what was going on between them that we simply do not know with much, if any, certainty.

Mabel then that early evening in February was at his bungalow being entertained and shown some new books he had recently acquired. The visit passed uneventfully and lasted less than an hour. After she arose to leave, Taylor walked her to her car at the street curbside, and

³⁷ Gene Fowler, *Father Goose* p. 313.

³⁸ Here again, if as we posited in the Preface there being a Mabel “double,” was it perchance the double Taylor was seeing? If so, did he know that is what she was (and not the “real” Mabel Normand)? Can the pale-faced Mabel of *Suzanna* be reconciled with the “Mabel” Taylor is spoken of as having an affair with? With other and similar questions arising to mind.

blowing him a kiss from inside her vehicle saw him alive for the last time. The following day, she received a call relaying the frightening news that he had been murdered in his home, shot from behind with a .38 caliber revolver by an unknown assailant. When the city detectives came to search the house, they found evidence linking Taylor to both Mabel and actress Mary Miles Minter, and with no little irony, a small framed picture of Mabel was found on display in the room where the director lay dead on the floor.

The Taylor murder is a strangely baffling and intricate case, replete with all manner of seeming red-herrings and possible scenarios to explain its taking place, and to this day remains a favorite puzzle for arm-chair detectives. Although the constraints of this introductory biography do not permit an in-depth examination,³⁹ two things ought to be pointed out, insofar as the affair affected Mabel.

The first is that though it's conceivable someone shot Taylor out of jealousy over her, Mabel herself never was, nor ever has been, very seriously considered a suspect in the shooting -- though this is not to say there haven't been some who tried to make her one.⁴⁰ The second point to be made is that her character was unfairly, if understandably, besmirched by her association with Taylor. To many it seemed that even if she was not guilty herself of the murder, her reputation was, nevertheless, irreparably tarnished by being so seemingly and closely connected with it. When compromising articles like a negligee and love letters were found in Taylor's abode, it at first wasn't clear whom they belonged to or what their significance was. As a result, Mabel was confusedly linked in the public mind with Mary Miles Minter, a Paramount actress, who did not conceal that she herself was deeply in love with Taylor. To make matters worse, hearsay and newspaper hype distorted or exaggerated the facts beyond recognition, such that, to this day, published accounts of the case are not infrequently at odds with each other in their conclusions. On a personal level, some of the press mercilessly ravaged her character, intentionally or no, by playing upon what might have been her role in the affair. In consequence of this publicly splashed whirlwind of both facts and misinformation, Mabel's standing with the public, like Arbuckle's, dropped so low that a number of cities went so far as to actually ban her films.

That the bannings and incessant attacks and accusations in the press seriously injured Mabel's well-being, even to the point of almost driving her mad, is perhaps not to be wondered. Like Arbuckle, she ostensibly became a scapegoat to shadowy, behind-the-scenes Hollywood power brokers seeking to reshape the existing order. After repeatedly giving her story of what she knew about the Taylor case and being interrogated time and again by both police and reporters, she sought to flee the pressure of the spotlight by traveling to Europe in the summer of 1922. The trip apparently did help to ease things for her, and in Europe she was personally introduced to a number of Europe's royalty and a few eminent notables, including George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells. In addition, it was during a stay in Paris that an heir to the Egyptian throne, Prince Ibrahim, offered his hand in marriage to her (which, though very flattered by the gesture, she graciously declined.)

Just as he had with *Molly O'*, Sennett found it necessary to withhold the release of *Suzanna*, until the scandal had some time to dissipate. Finally, almost a year after the Taylor murder, the film did come out, and despite, or perhaps even because of her bad press, it did well at the box-office. Viewing Mabel in *Suzanna*, although her pale and puffy, sometimes distraught, mien reveals the beleaguered state she was in at that time (both after and before Taylor's death), she puts a positive and optimistic face on things that remains an encouragement and inspiration even today.

Bolstered by *Suzanna's* success, Sennett's next slated vehicle for her was *The Extra Girl*. The story was one, later made somewhat popular by Colleen Moore and Marion Davies, about a small town girl who goes to Hollywood and doesn't make good. It gives a semi-candid,

³⁹ However, see Appendix D.

⁴⁰ For example, in 1930, Henry Peavey, Taylor's valet, by implication, accused Mabel of crime.

behind-the-scenes glimpse at the day to day life and workings of a movie studio, and which Sennett thought was something needed to help alleviate public worries and concerns about the industry and its people. Directed, once again, by the usually reliable F. Richard Jones, the film is most remembered for a both droll and exciting scene in which Mabel leads a real lion by a rope around some movie sets, thinking it's only Teddy the dog dressed up.

The Extra Girl as a whole works very well, and, at least in a few moments early on, Mabel's miming is genuinely exquisite. Yet for the most part her energy is lacking, and the effects of the anguish and trauma she'd been suffering are again all too evident. There is at times a discernible air of dolor and sadness about her that gives the film a somewhat tragic quality that would otherwise is not warranted at all by the script. In this paradoxical way, the film is as unexpectedly moving as it is also casually entertaining.

Things went well upon *The Extra Girl's* release on November 9, 1923; and it was promisingly successful with theater-goers, garnering success in the Christmas season. Then, however, on New Years Day 1924, calamity struck even yet once more. Mabel, it would seem, was visiting with Chaplin's former leading lady, Edna Purviance and Edna's then romantic interest, millionaire oil tycoon, Courtland S. Dines at Dines' Los Angeles apartment. Though the Dines affair is not as perplexing a mystery as the Taylor case, exactly what happened is far from certain either. As related by Adela Rogers St. Johns, when Mabel first arrived, Dines, in an attempt at humor, said something insulting to her. Her young chauffeur, Kelly, whose real name turned out to be Greer, told him to take it back. Dines refused, and Mabel then went inside with him. Whether to merely take her home and or to "square things" with Dines, a short while later, Greer returned to the apartment with a revolver concealed in his pocket. An altercation arose between the two, and somehow Greer ended up shooting Dines, with Greer claiming self-defense. In the succeeding police inquiry, it was brought to light that the chauffeur, who had been hired by her secretary, was, unbeknownst to Mabel, an ex-convict. The psychiatrist officially assigned to examine Greer enunciated the clinical conclusion that the young man "had a deep, spiritual love for Miss Normand," and was motivated by a delusion that he needed to protect her. Dines survived the incident, dropped charges, and the chauffeur after being tried was subsequently acquitted.

Despite being formally exonerated, Mabel's association with this second shooting stirred up yet another hue and cry. A not so successful move arose to have her films banned throughout the nation. Ohio attorney general C. C. Crabbe expressed the sentiments of the most fervid of these when he declared, "This film star has been entirely too closely connected with disgraceful shooting affairs and her name brought into such disrepute as to warrant this suggestion," i.e. the ban.⁴¹ Soon many theaters in major U.S. cities did bar Mabel's films from exhibition and on the grounds that they would "have a disastrous effect upon the youth of the community."

To counter this, Mabel, in the April of 1924 went on a nation-wide movie theater circuit promoting *The Extra Girl* -- and to clear her name. The tour did manage to gain her sympathy, and the formal bans of her films were overtime ultimately lifted, with *The Extra Girl* actually ending up doing excellent business. The problem was, the costs in publicity to Sennett to help exonerate her were immensely expensive, and mitigated little by the film's profits. For this and other reasons, he afterwards scrapped *Mary Anne*, a film that was intended to have been her next project. Thus summarily ended Mabel's long working relationship with her one time sweetheart and the film industry's then comic titan.

September 1924 found her named in the divorce dispute of the very wealthy Norman and Georgia Church. Mrs. Church, in the complaint against her husband, claimed Church had imparted to her that Mabel had amorous meetings with him while he was in the hospital. Although it was true that in August 1923 (after *The Extra Girl* had been finished), Mabel was a patient in the same hospital recuperating from a collarbone injury she had suffered in

⁴¹ *The New York Times*, Jan. 5, 1924.

consequence of a horse riding accident, she denied the charges. And even though Mrs. Church's complaint was lodged against her husband and not her, Mabel wanted to take the opportunity to publicly vindicate herself; and so sought to intervene in the proceedings. While Norman Church later retracted what he had told his wife, and Mrs. Church for her part apologized, Mabel, after several months, lost her action in the suit on the grounds that, although her name was brought up, she did not have direct interest in the matter, and her guilt or innocence ultimately was not pertinent to the main issue.

During about this same period, Mabel attended classes on sketching and piano at the University of Southern California, and, in general, temporarily took time off, for a try at some low-profile, quiet living, including keeping a diary and writing poetry. Yet settling down permanently this way did not seem to suit her. Of course, by this juncture, it looked as though Mabel's career was over for good. And for purposes of reestablishing her once extensive box-office popularity, it indeed was. As a result, she thought she would find her career revived by going on stage, appearing in some northeastern theaters in *The Little Mouse* in September 1925. The script, however, did not have that much to recommend it, her stage voice was faint, and as this perhaps was simply not a good time for her to be taking up such a markedly different endeavor and discipline as theater, the play flopped.

The Last Years

"Those interested in the personality of Mabel Normand can receive no more illuminating introduction to her than the incident just sketched. There are a hundred tales of this characteristic response to any human appeal clustering about the name of Mabel Normand. One which came directly under my observation relates to a poor girl with a dependent family. The girl was stricken with tuberculosis and, although Mabel did not know her, she became interested in her condition through a friend of hers. Immediately she went to see her, and when she left she pressed something into the sick girl's hand. It was only after she had gone that the other realized what her caller had left. It was a check for a thousand dollars.

"Nor does Mabel wait for the large demand upon her sympathy. Gifts from her come unprovoked as manna. She is likely to go out and buy a hundred dollar beaded bag for a stenographer in the organization, and just as likely to invest a corresponding amount in remembering somebody whom she has met once and happened to like."⁴²

While Mabel every now and then came to speak of herself as "bad luck," she was at least fortunate to have some staunch and loyal friends, such as the Talmadges, particularly Norma, who did stand by her during her various ordeals. Though many did turn their backs on her, including some she was most generous and giving to, not everyone took advantage of her situation, or were intimidated by the smears and mockery leveled at her. Throughout much of her troubles, some of Hollywood's most prominent notables *were* there to quietly or vociferously aid her as best, under the circumstances, they could. Needless to add, it speaks honorably and courageously of such that they did not buckle under to the fear and hysteria engendered by the bizarre and sensational criminal events.

Of course, she could not but be grieved, and sometimes angry, by all that had transpired, yet Mabel was fully aware of the injustice of the attacks made against her, and for better or worse, refused to have her life held in check constantly worrying about how others might judge her. In this way, she remained more or less defiant despite the heavy odds against her. Yet for all her some times combativeness, Mabel always remained an extremely kind and generous, if sometimes lonely, person who always tried to keep up a cheery outlook and smile; even though inside she was being emotionally and physically eaten up by the various and combined challenges thrown her way. "I knew Miss Normand," Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. has said, "She never seemed to allow her personal sorrows and problems to show and be a burden to others. She exuded all the happy charm of a fresh, lovely, bright flower."⁴³

⁴² Samuel Goldwyn, *Behind the Screen* (1923.)

⁴³ See Betty Fussell's *Mabel: Hollywood's First I-Don't-Care Girl*.

Mabel made a brief comeback in 1926 and 1927 with a series of two and three reelers produced by Hal Roach and distributed by Pathé. In these she typically plays a poor, overworked waif, who has to contend daily with petty cheats and, as well, a thick-headed father in order to scrape a meager living for her impecunious family. They are Cinderella stories, but with the difference that Mabel's Cinderella must be wooed to be won, and it isn't always clear that the different prince-charmings ever manage to succeed. Hers is a rather curious, paradoxical figure in these comedies. There is in her eyes a wary skepticism betokening a more profound sense and understanding of life. And yet at other times, paradoxically, she comes across as silly and light-headed as a five year old.

Though the effects of time and the fragility of her constitution show, she, oddly enough, looks more healthy in these films than she does in *The Extra Girl*. One usual flaw of her post-1920 films in general is that she's simply too old to be playing these little girl roles. *Raggedy Rose*, the title of one film, aptly describes the impression she sometimes gives. Nonetheless, in most of the films, and considering the enormous pain she was suffering in her private life, she performs effectively enough, if with some stiffness to her movements, as the life-worn, little ragamuffin. The general tone and pacing of these films are far different than anything she ever did with Sennett, and are persuasive proof that, even at this relatively late period of her life, she could play a greater range of roles than previously permitted by either producers or audiences.

In September 1926, while giving a small party for some friends, she and Lew Cody, her *Mickey* co-star and chum of many years, to the amusement of guests, acted out a marriage proposal. Following this, he asked her on a dare, to marry him. She accepted, and before (it was said) she could voice other word, he whisked her off to a Ventura Justice of the Peace. By next morning, the two had been made legally man and wife. It turned out, that Cody had proposed to her a number of times before -- and so he later averred --- but she had turned him down. The sudden wedding made front-page headlines and understandably came as a big surprise to everyone.

Perhaps not so surprising, the marriage had problems. Among other difficulties, it is not unreasonable to assume that Cody did not stringently hold to his vows. And even though Mabel could or did know this in advance, still it must only have brought her more grief. The marriage then inevitably wound up becoming an arrangement of convenience as anything else. For the most part, they lived in separate homes and were usually kept apart by conflicting schedules and lifestyles. Yet it did have its benefits. Both shared that lively sense of humor, that had played its part in their tying the knot in the first place. As well as being a very popular Hollywood idol, admired by men and sought after by women, Cody gave Mabel a strength and protection in her isolated life she badly needed. While sometimes presented as a drunkard and a bit of a rascal, which on occasion he *mayhap* could be, Cody was arguably a shrewder and even nobler soul than he is given credit. In addition to being a kind of shield to Mabel during her last years, he was one of those who stood publicly alongside Arbuckle when the scorned comedian attempted a comeback in the early thirties.

As for Sennett, he says, at the end of his autobiography, "I never married. There was only one girl." If finally losing Mabel to Cody in this embarrassing way weren't enough, he also lost almost the entirety of his massive financial holdings as a result of the crash of 1929 and ended up spending most of the rest of his life getting by on a humble and modest income. Up to his death in 1960, much of his time was taken up in retrospective productions and celebrations of his early career. With almost religious devotion, the one subject he most frequently and tirelessly delighted in raising and reminding people of was his former Keystone star and one time fiancée.

In March and August 1927, Mabel, reported acutely ill with pneumonia, was hospitalized. In November, however, of the same year, she was apparently well enough to

make a trip to the nation's capitol with Cody. Then in December 1928, she was diagnosed as suffering from tuberculosis; symptoms of which had been hinted at perhaps as early as *Mickey*.

She had hoped she could be cured in her home. Yet as her health rapidly deteriorated, she finally consented, in September 1929, to move to a sanitarium in Monrovia, CA. for ongoing medical attention. Nonetheless and after battling the rapacious disease there for five months, she died at last on February 23, 1930, at 2:25 am, conscious to the end. Kept from her the while was that Lew himself was the victim of a heart ailment that in 1934, within just a few short years of her own passing, proved fatal.

I. “Keystone Mabel”

The Film Comedy of Mabel Normand 1911-1916

“Just take Miss Normand at her screen value, and you know her.”
~ James Quirk in *Photoplay*, August 1915.

As well as being one of early film comedy’s most prominent and familiar personalities, Mabel Normand was among its most creative explorers and innovators. In several ways, she equaled, and in some respects exceeded, the work of her more famous male counterparts. Unfortunately, the subtlety, range and freshness of her brand of comedy has not infrequently been overlooked or made light of; and this, typically, due to the negative notoriety she has received as a result of undeserved scandal and resultant, if understandable, misunderstanding.

Yet even taking the effect of scandal into account, we are left with the fact that the wide scope of her accomplishment cannot be adequately ascertained by screening a mere few of her films -- which is usually the most a given individual might see of her work. In a career that spanned from 1911 to 1927, she made at least 198 films: that is about 176 shorts and 22 features (four reels or more). During this same period she went through numerous vicissitudes and transformations: both negative and positive, some insignificant, some considerable. The negative changes were mostly a result of personal, as well as public, misfortunes in her life. Yet on the positive side she improved and developed as one would expect an intelligent and usually hard working artist to. The problem, however, was that the negative factors could seriously set back the progress she did make. For example, in the films of her last years she will at times seem devoid of much of that gaiety and quick instinct for irony which lent themselves to making her earlier outings so especially humorous and delightful. But this change came about in consequence of more than just ordinary maturation and development, and was also the result of other factors affecting her, such as health problems, aforementioned scandal, and trends in an often fiercely competitive film industry.

Despite her dying at a premature age, the younger Mabel then is, generally speaking, noticeably more exuberant than the later one -- to say the least. So even though she progressed in her work, in a general sense there was, simultaneously, a gradual loss to her well-being stemming from external events largely beyond her control. It is the incidental life-affecting factors like these, some of them normal, some of them unusual, which have served to deprive film historians and enthusiasts a more just idea of her talent and ability. Since so much is varied in Mabel Normand’s story that brief assessments about her overall merit and scope as an artist rarely do her justice, and often need to be qualified. There’s simply so much that would seem to require explanation. To attempt now then, many years later, to properly evaluate her requires a bit more than the casual eye and terse reflection which silent film comedy is sometimes wont to receive.

In this the first of two essays, we will attempt a survey of her art and screen technique in that part of her career spanning from her first Vitagraph films in 1911, to her time at Biograph and Keystone, up until her last films made for Triangle-Keystone in 1916. A very persuasive case can be made that this period from 1911 through 1916 was the high-point of her artistic energy and creativity. Be this as it may, it at least serves as convenient framework by which to demonstrate some of the sundry facets of her comic acting and technique. Although she did direct and write a few scripts for some of her own short comedies, it is as a performer and collaborator that she most stands out, and it is in this light that she is best viewed and considered.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ In this essay, Mabel Normand is ordinarily referred to simply as Mabel. Yet since the character she plays in many of her films goes by the name of “Mabel,” the name Mabel will refer to Mabel Normand the person, while “Mabel” (in quotation marks) denotes the film character.

A mere five foot in height, Mabel had thick Brunette hair (though sometimes spoken of as black), expressive dark eyes, and attractive looks that both winsome and amusing. So much so that it is not unusual, even to this day, for her to arouse laughter or a chuckle in still photographs. That she was both small and very pretty gave her room to behave in ways that otherwise might not be so amusing if someone less attractive or sympathetic did those same things. In the way we might indulge a young child, a puppy or kitten for their somewhat unruly behavior because they are so naturally appealing, so “Mabel” (her comic character) could get away with things which others couldn’t and for similar reasons. The same behavior coming from someone else more full-grown or physically powerful, on the other hand, would probably be less funny, if not outright offensive. “Mabel,” on the other hand, while mischievous (and in rarer instances even obnoxious, see, for example, *His Wedding Day* 1913 and *Mabel’s Wilful Way* 1915) never comes across as actually callous or mean spirited. On the contrary, time and again she displays an overt empathy toward her fellow players (in their character roles), and she would, as often as not, apologize to a fellow character after having pulled a prank on them, and with affection and sincerity mean it. If then she does act up or misbehaves, it’s rarely because her heart is in the wrong place.

She first acquired her earliest dramatic education from stage and club shows of various kinds she saw or heard about while growing up on Staten Island, including some presumably in which her father participated in as pianist. Otherwise, before entering films she was employed as an artist’s model in New York City, posing for well known advertising illustrators such as Charles Dana Gibson, James Montgomery Flagg, the Leydendecker brothers, Penrhyn Stanlaws, and C. Coles Phillips, not to mention a number of studio photographers as well. This kind of background certainly had an important impact on her subsequent film acting since modeling required her to assume all kinds of emotional attitudes, and postures. When an illustrator asked her to show longing, sadness, delight or gaiety, that was just what she had to learn and to give of herself to do. It was then in no small part from the training provided by these modeling sessions that she began developing a quick and ready repertoire by which to successfully impart various feelings and emotions.⁴⁵

After receiving advice and suggestions from studio friends and acquaintances, Mabel moved from modeling into the just burgeoning movie business. It was 1911 and she was about eighteen years old when she was first hired at D. W. Griffith’s Biograph Company located in Manhattan’s lower east side. Following this very brief, introductory stint, she went to work at the Vitagraph Company in Flatbush only to return to Biograph in late July 1911. She initially made some dramatic shorts with Biograph, some of these directed by D.W. Griffith himself. But ultimately, as events took their course, she ended up under Mack Sennett’s supervision as part of Biograph’s comedy unit. After that, sometime in the Spring of 1912, she, along with Ford Sterling and Henry Lehrman, accompanied Sennett in leaving Biograph to go West permanently to form the Keystone Film Company (a subsidiary of the New York Motion Picture Company based in New York City.)

Mabel’s Vitagraph films to have had a drawing room quality and a quaint, turn-of-the-century simplicity about them. In *Troublesome Secretaries* (1911), for instance, is a scene where “Betty” (Mabel) is walked home along a residential lane by her boyfriend, Ralph Ince. As they pause in their stroll, he warily looks about him before kissing her on the forehead. Betty, all this while and index finger on her lip, coyly giggles at his respectful caution and their perhaps too daring audacity. After waving good-bye to each other as they separate, she walks the rest of her way home with this curious look of concern on her face, like someone who, out of bashfulness, is not quite sure whether her romantic inclination has or might not get her into trouble.

⁴⁵ Penrhyn Stanlaws: “[M]any girls who have studied posing in artist’s studios and whose faces have become familiar to you on the magazine covers are now well known on screen. Marion Davies, Mabel Normand, Anna Q. Nilsson, Helene Chadwick, Mae Murray, Alice Joyce and Florence La Badie are just a few who have passed through my own studio on the road to fame and fortune. Most of them were at the high school age when they started working for me. Often when I seen them on the screen, I notice some trick that they picked up while acting as my models. Now the trick is done with ease and grace, but, if the truth be known, they spent many tedious hours learning it...” *Movie Weekly*, April 16, 1921.

“Betty,” a character Mabel often played in her Vitagraph comedies, was a young foil to John Bunny’s bumbling and struggling elder, and was in some ways the precursor to “Keystone Mabel.” Though different, they do share certain similarities. Both “Betty” and “Mabel” are playful and tend to be a bit mischievous, as well as being attractive to men. The difference is that “Betty” is generally more staid and subdued than “Mabel,” who is ordinarily more rambunctious and free spirited.⁴⁶ The divergence is to some extent also a reflection of change and maturation in Mabel’s own life and the times in which she lived.

While replete with vitality in most of her earliest films, she appears more circumspect and demure (relatively speaking) in those made in the East. When, however, in the winter of 1911 she first traveled with the Biograph company on its annual winter-spring trip West, southern California, with its sunshine and orange groves, seems to have stirred in her a greater sense of freedom and independence such that she comes across as more self-assured and confident than previously. At first Mabel’s performances and mannerism were for the most part conventional and very much in keeping with D.W. Griffith’s school of acting, such as certain stock expressions used to convey various emotions and demeanors. Yet with time, she utilized and built upon this experience to develop and create styles and approaches of her own.

A number of Mabel’s Biograph films are dramas directed by Griffith, including *Saved From Himself*, *A Squaw’s Love*, *The Eternal Mother*, and *The Mender of Nets*. Certainly, it is interesting to see what Griffith was able to bring out in her performances; and grave moments of tender sympathy or sadness, such as these films call for, are otherwise absent in these early years of her career. Yet this observed, most of the films she appeared in at Biograph were not dramas, but rather farce-comedies, and these latter done under the direction of Mack Sennett.

The Biograph and Keystone comedies, as has been pointed out, had their conceptual origin in stage burlesque, newspaper comic strips, circus acts, and French film comedy – as well as not infrequently being in their way satires or takes offs on certain Biograph dramas. Moreover, the characters of these scenarios were usually intended as somewhat absurd caricatures rather than realistic personalities with the films being almost invariably *ensemble* pieces with little or no development permitted of individual characters.

Even though Mabel herself was a leading star in her Biograph and Keystone comedies, neither she nor any of Keystone’s other players – or, for that matter, directors -- ever enjoyed much production control or say about how films were to be made. This was the result of tight management Sennett exercised over production; a factor which finally led to Chaplin and Arbuckle’s, not to mention Mabel’s, later departure from Keystone. These then are shorts with relatively few big name stars, but no main star who had an independent say about the films content and how they were to be put together. It is true that around 1915 and 1916 that Arbuckle, both as star and director, *was* granted a certain autonomy, yet having to finally answer to Sennett still had a restrictive impact on his creativity and inventiveness while working with the company.

⁴⁶ The Betty of Mabel’s Vitagraph films would seem to have been something of a take-off on the “Betty” of a Pathé series of comedies under that name. In the *Nickelodeon* of July 1, 1910, the following Pathé advertisement appeared:

“Introducing Our New Comedienne!”

“‘Rebellious Betty’ is the first of a series of Pathé comedies’

“ We have already advertised the fact that Betty was coming, and now she is here and appears before you in the first of a series of comic films which should be a big feature in any house. Betty antics and pranks are distantly fresh and laughable, she is a mischievous and wilful tomboy, who shrinks at nothing so long as she can get her own way. In this first film she succeeds in upsetting half a dozen people, destroys an artist’s masterpiece, jumps upon and rides away with somebody else’s bicycle, which she afterwards abandons for a horse, and finally knocks off the head of the butler. All these things she does simply because she has been refused the privilege of accepting an invitation to go for a motor ride. (897 feet).” (See also *The Nickelodeon*, later changed to *Motography*, August 1, 1910)

“Pathé Betty” then was very likely a significant inspiration for “Keystone Mabel.” Also it should be noted, that while Mabel’s Betty was the most famous, she was not the only Vitagraph Betty. After she left the company, Vitagraph retained Betty as a stock character as late as 1917, different actresses at different times having taken on the comedic role in it various forms.

Although the Vitagraph film *Indiscretions of Betty* (which has been attributed---probably wrongly ---to being one of Mabel’s films) predates the Pathé announcement given above, contemporary descriptions of the plot to *Indiscretions* show it to have been a drama rather than comedy. So the name “Betty” in its title is probably a coincidence.

In an interview she did in the late twenties, Mabel described the “Fun Factory’s” cost conscious and assembly line production methods this way:

“So we, like other companies, would stop in the middle of one (film) and start another, simply rearranging the props, pulling a pair of overalls on over my frock, putting a cop’s cap on Fatty Arbuckle, and having Ford Sterling or Charlie Chaplin chase us around in front of the camera.

“There’d be no script, no plot, no idea of what we’d do when we started -- and no title. All we needed was 600 or 700 feet of film showing us doing something and 300 or 400 feet of educational film to tack on it, such as how sheep are sheared or olives canned.”⁴⁷

While it is not true that all Keystone films were made without any written scenario or script, it is correct to say they were often as impromptu as planned out in nature. When written scenarios were used, they were frequently modified during the course of shooting, as well as in editing. It was not until 1915 and 1916, however, that advanced planning proper of individual films became possible. Yet despite the ad hoc planning and skimpy budgets, making these comedies day in and day out did require a not inconsiderable amount of toil and effort. When Chaplin returned to Hollywood to get his special Oscar in the seventies he visited with Minta Durfee and in chatting with her recalled what hard and regular work it was making those early films.⁴⁸

At Keystone, Mabel did direct a few short films herself; indeed in 1914 was actually head of one of the Keystone’s production units. Yet when it came to being *behind* the camera, she never had pretensions to being a film making pioneer or genius. Nevertheless, she often did markedly influence those she worked with and was quite original and resourceful as an advisor and collaborator. In an article for *Picture-Play*, April 1916, Arbuckle, in answering how his films were put together, was quoted as saying “As we go along, fresh ideas pop out, and we all talk it over. I certainly have a clever crowd working with me. Mabel alone, is good for a dozen new suggestions in every picture.”⁴⁹

Mabel’s talent then lay in her being an inspired, clever and imaginative screen performer, than as a calculating, cinematic visionary -- as such. While one could cite a number of reasons, perhaps the best single explanation for her limiting herself is that she simply didn’t possess the pride of great ambition to do more. Although she was naturally intelligent to the point of manifesting a kind of spontaneous and intuitive genius, her formal education was very limited and she did not have a manager like Charlotte Pickford to plan and organize her career and activities. In consequence of which, she appears to have been usually inclined to let others, and who she felt knew more, take the lead when it came to larger matters of production. On the other hand, however, it may very well have been (knowing what else we do know about her) that she did aspire to do more, but that the politics of business forbade it.

Her initial co-stars, both at Biograph and Keystone, were Sennett, Fred Mace and Ford Sterling. Dell Henderson was not part of the founding Keystone troupe, but he did figure prominently in Mabel’s early Biograph comedies.⁵⁰ He usually, and without deviation, played a

⁴⁷ “Madcap Mabel Normand - The True Story of a Great Comedienne,” Part II, *Liberty Magazine*, Sept. 13, 1930. The majority of these comedies Mabel appeared in from 1911 to 1916, incidentally, were half (i.e., “split”) or else one reel films, lasting from about five to ten minutes respectively; though in the latter part of this same period she expanded to two and an occasional three reel film.

⁴⁸ As related to me by Minta’s friend and film history archivist Don Schneider. Stuart Oderman, in his *The Keystone Krowd* p. 115, also quotes Minta as saying “Mabel was a comedienne, and he [Sennett] built everything around her. He would have worked her to death twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.”

⁴⁹ “Mabel Normand had no illusions about her talent as a director. As she told Robert Florey in 1922: ‘It would be pretense to say that the comedy chases in which I appeared with Charlie and Roscoe were directed by a director truly exercising his métier. The director, as we know him today, was then virtually non-existent. The films which I directed or appeared in were made without any directorial technique or photographic artistry. No one thought it necessary to explain to the cameraman what was wanted, and nearly all the scenes were taken in long shots. Our pictures were a group effort, and our comedy evolved out of suggestions made by everyone in the cast and crew....’

“On directing Chaplin, Miss Normand said: ‘We reciprocated. I would direct Charlie in his scenes, and he would direct me in mine. We worked together in developing the comedy action, taking a basic idea and constantly adding new gags. Each day Charlie would come to the set brimming with new ideas, which he would act out for me. I would add my suggestions, and soon we were ready for a take. Some of our films took only a few hours to make, others occupied us for as much as several days.’” From *Hollywood: The Golden Era*, by Jack Spears.

⁵⁰ W. C. Fields fans will perhaps recollect Henderson as the flask-toting mayor in *You’re Telling Me* (1934). He also appeared in the Fields’ films *The Old-Fashioned Way* (1934), *It’s a Gift* (1934), and *Poppy* (1936), as well as the Little Rascals shorts *Helping*

mild mannered, gentlemanly fellow. Sterling was featured more in her Keystone films than the ones made with Biograph. Mace and Sennett, on the other hand, were regulars in both the Biograph and early Keystone comedies. Following these, it was later Chaplin and Arbuckle who shared center stage with her. Other Biograph and Keystone stars who appeared prominently or frequently with her were Alice Davenport, Nick Cogley, Charles Avery, Al St. John and later Owen Moore. But it was the six first mentioned here -- Dell Henderson, Fred Mace, Mack Sennett, Ford Sterling, Roscoe Arbuckle and Charlie Chaplin who most often served as her screen foil or partner.

The Roles

In the Biograph and Keystone films, Mabel played a relatively broad range of roles and types. To illustrate, the following is a list of some of them -- along with the names of a nominal few of the films in which those roles appeared. Naturally, it wasn't unusual to combine a few of these in one film; for example, the spoiled daughter is also a flirt in *What the Doctor Ordered* and *The Speed Kings*.

- * Coquette: *Oh, Those Eyes, A Dash Through the Clouds, The Ragtime Band, Caught in a Cabaret, Mabel and Fatty's Wash Day.*
- * Spoiled girl: *Hot Stuff, The Furs, The Ragtime Band*
- * Teasing and mischievous daughter or sister: *Troublesome Secretaries, Tomboy Bessie, Hide and Seek*
- * Motherly sister: *Hide and Seek, The Fatal Mallet, Mabel's Blunder*
- * Restless tomboy: *The Brave Hunter, What The Doctor Ordered, The Speed Kings, A Muddy Romance, Mabel at the Wheel*
- * Termagant or silly housewife: *His Trysting Place, Mabel and Fatty's Wash Day*
- * Jealous girl friend or wife: *The Fickle Spaniard, His Trysting Place, Fatty and Mabel at the San Diego Exposition*
- * Newly wed bride, *That Little Band of Gold, Fatty and Mabel Adrift*
- * School teacher: *The Little Teacher*
- * Somebody's playful, hard to control daughter: *Tomboy Bessie, The Speed Kings, Fatty and Mabel's Simple Life, Mabel's Wilful Way*
- * Male impersonator: *Subduing Mrs. Nag, Katchem Kate, Mabel's Strategem, Mabel's Blunder*
- * Secretary: *Mabel's Strategem, Mabel's Blunder*
- * Scheming bad girl: *The Furs, Tillie's Punctured Romance*
- * Society girl or debutante: *Caught in a Cabaret, Their Social Splash, Mabel Lost and Won*
- * Bathing beauty: *The Diving Girl, The Water Nymph, Mabel's New Hero*
- * Flirtatious spouse: *Getting Acquainted, Mabel and Fatty's Wash Day, Mabel, Fatty and the Law*
- * Farm or country girl: *Bangville Police, Those Country Kids, Fatty and Mabel Adrift*
- * Serving maid or working girl: *The Fickle Spaniard, Mabel's Dramatic Career, Mabel's Busy Day*
- * Female barber: *The Fickle Spaniard*
- * Alternately tender and irresponsible mother: *His Trysting Place*
- * Damsel or comic heroine: *Barney Oldfield's Race for A Life, Cohen Saves the Flag, Mabel At the Wheel, Fatty and Mabel's Simple Life.*

Given these various roles, who then was "Keystone Mabel?" The first film in which "Mabel" is used in the title is *Mabel's Lovers*, released November 4, 1912. This was followed by a good many more films so denoted, lasting up into 1916. "Mabel," then and as such was the character who took on these roles and guises: e.g. "Mabel" as girlfriend, "Mabel" as race car driver, as spouse, as daughter, etc. In other words, she was, generally speaking and most of the time, essentially the same exaggerated female, "Mabel," albeit in different roles and

Grandma (1931), *Free Eats* (1932) and *Choo-Choo* (1932), and Laurel and Hardy's *The Laurel and Hardy Murder Case* (1930), and the Three Stooges' *Men in Black* (1934); as Marion Davies' father, Col. Pepper, in the memorable "Show People" (1928).

situations. While there is at times a sensuality about her played-up for comic situations, such as bathing beauty settings, more frequently her character is an undaunted tomboy or demi-tomboy; who spars, competes against, or else engages in some kind of playful frolic with villains, suitors, or childhood chums in absurd comic circumstances. Yet though a tomboy, hers is a girlish sort rather than a boyish or more masculine kind – and which contrasting girlishness (i.e., contrasting to her male, hyper-activity) is all part of the humor of it. Although we speak of “Keystone Mabel” here, in the common parlance of the time she was known first as the “Biograph Diving Girl” or “Diving Girl,” later as “The Keystone Girl,” and then “Keystone’s Mabel” and finally (and formally) “Keystone Mabel.”

Rather than flee from a dangerous situation, her character will sometimes, out of naiveté or innocence, turn about to face it. In *The Brave Hunter*, for instance, she encounters a large circus bear on the loose. Though at first startled, rather than run she looks into the bear’s eyes and starts playing with him. Such gumption was not uncharacteristic of her in real life, as recounted by Minta Durfee in the early 70’s to Don Schneider:

“...[S]he came down every Sunday and she and Roscoe would swim from in front of our house, to the Venice pier and back again, at 11 o’clock every Sunday morning.

“So one Sunday morning they came back, and instead of the two of them getting out of the water immediately and coming up on the sand, there was something going on, you couldn’t make up your mind just exactly what it was, but I could see her arm over something, and I don’t know what it was over, and nobody else did. Some people were standing, and of course all the strolling people on the strand, naturally came every day -- it became a regular excitement on Sunday, to see these people dining, all these stars, and people from the theater, and they were all standing there, and nobody could make up his mind what it was that was going on out there.

“Well, what it was, as they were swimming back, from the Venice pier, up came a dolphin, and instead of Mabel being frightened like anybody would, -- because none of us knew anything about dolphins in those days -- she just put her arm over the neck of this dolphin and he swam right along with them.

“And do you know, every Sunday, for nearly a year, he came and swam with them, down and back, until one day they came back and then he disappeared, and they never saw him again. Isn’t that interesting? Isn’t that wonderful?”⁵¹

Occasionally, “Mabel” will herself be acting or putting one over on some one else within the story. In a film like *Oh, Those Eyes* and *Tomboy Bessie*, for example, she plays someone who is play-acting in order to mislead another or others characters. In such situations, she is essentially and really a naive coquette seemingly sure of herself. Yet when thwarted, vexed or exposed, as called for by turn of events, her confident facade drops off into tears and dismay or else laughter at the incongruity of things.

In a later interview, Mabel provided some thoughts on her comedic characterizations and the use of subtlety in a farce.

“Try to burlesque somebody. You’ll notice that you probably do it with the sort of a brush that the bill-board posters use while small boys admiringly surround them. But you won’t appear as clever to grown-ups as the poster-pasters do to the younger generation. Your brush is too thick, too wide, too everything. Burlesque is a delicate art, believe me. I’m no highbrow, as I said before, but I know that. And I know too, that when you make fun of people you have to mimic them with just the slightest exaggeration in order to be really funny. If you overdo it, you ruin, you ruin your performance, and it’s pretty hard not to overdo your act. You have to watch every gesture, every action, no matter how small. A careless lifting of eye-brows may spoil a perfectly good hand-gesture. Watch your step all the time, and watch everything

⁵¹ Don Schneider interview with Minta Durfee transcript, Reel 3A, July 21, 1974. Mabel is also reported as having swum together with a tame seal, or more plausibly a *trained* one since such, named “Big Ben,” appeared in a Keystone film with her (see *Motography*, October 24, 1914 and *Photo-Play Review*, August 21, 1915.)

else you have about you, too. If you seem to have any idea that you're playing at something, you won't get across."⁵²

Her Art

"I loved Florence Turner and Mary Fuller, but every fiber in my body responded to Flora Finch's celebrated comedies; and though I was quite unconscious of it, I can see now that I was always wondering how I would do the funny little stunts she did in her pictures. And, quite likely, figuring my way would be better!

"And to give you a sidelight on another angle of our early history: I had nobody to tell me what to do. Dramatic actresses had the stage to fall back on, the sure-fire hits of theatrical history in pose and facial expression; but I had to do something that nobody had ever done before.

"I had no precedent, nothing to imitate, for Flora Finch's art, based as it was on her angularity and candidly exploited homeliness, never would have fitted me. Other comedienne with equal frankness got their laughs with their fat bodies or their somewhat ghastly grotesquery of gesture.

"Since all previous laughs had been achieved through the spoken word and, in our early days, through slapstick hokey, I had to cleave a new path to laughter through the wilderness of the industry's ignorance and inexperience. I created my own standard of fun, simply letting spontaneity and my inborn sense of what is mirth-provoking guide me, for no director ever taught me a thing."⁵³

There are *two* key elements to Mabel Normand's screen art. The *first* of these is her ability to be both romantically appealing *and* boisterously funny at the same time. Traditionally, though with some exception, the *funny* women in common stage dramas and vaudeville were of ungainly appearance; their grotesque features and manners being what usually made them amusing. Flora Finch, for instance, the then popular Vitagraph comedienne (with whom Mabel made at least one film), was noticeably tall and thin. Mabel on the other hand demonstrated that it was possible for someone to be both very pretty and not only amusing but even rollicking. The humor here is of a paradoxical kind, arising out of the contrast between her petite prettiness, and her willful, sometimes rowdy conduct. Being beautiful and acting funny perhaps seems easy and simple enough for an attractive actress to do. But pulling it off effectively on screen, in a slapstick environment no less, is a good deal more challenging; for it demands an actress to do nothing less than balance and reconcile the ridiculous and the sublime. This in turn requires a more than normal perceptivity of self and other persons in the immediate surroundings. It is an intuitive and sympathetic kind of intelligence based on a natural understanding of human feelings and character, as opposed to something learned through academic or scientific instruction. Part of what makes it all work is that she avoids trying to upstage other players, indeed, is often empathetic toward them, while not above making herself the object of her humor. For such reasons, the audience more easily understood, related to, and excused her when she otherwise acted up and went wild.

A newspaper reporter once asked her whether it was hard for a pretty woman to be a success in film comedy:

"‘Yes,’ she answered. ‘Most pretty girls who go into comedy work are content to be merely pretty. The great difference is to put character into acting without either distorting your face or using comedy make-up. Anyone who photographs well can walk on a scene and flirt with the comedian which is all that most good-looking girls are required to do in comedies. It takes very little ability on their part for all they have to do is follow direction. (And here Miss Normand gave an imitation of a comedy coquette flirting according to the commands of her director). But to make a farce heroine more than a mere doll, you must think out the situation yourself and above all you must pay great attention to every little detail in the scene. The little bits of business that seem insignificant are what make good comedy.’"⁵⁴

The *second* key element to Mabel Normand's film art is her emotional fluidity: that is, her remarkable ability to go from one emotion to another in a credible and convincing manner. The range of feeling she could express was by any standard phenomenal; and in this her talent

⁵² *Dramatic Mirror*, June 19, 1920.

⁵³ "Madcap Mabel Normand," Part I, *Liberty*, Sept. 6, 1930.

⁵⁴ *New York Telegraph*, Feb. 13, 1916.

was on par with Chaplin's at his best.⁵⁵ Despite their rapid frequency, the emotions are authentic and ring true. Indeed, she is even believable when we know her character in the story is merely pretending the emotion; as, for instance, when she attempts to divert or mislead a would-be suitor (e.g., in *Oh, Those Eyes!* and *The Furs*) or other object of her teasing (*Tomboy Bessie* and *The Speed Kings*.)

A nominal instance, of which there really are countless, of Mabel's agility to skip from one emotion to another with swiftness and ease is in the Keystone short *Those Country Kids*. She is sitting at the edge of a well with Roscoe Arbuckle, as a rural bumpkin, standing beside her. The two are amicably chatting and laughing together when Roscoe, with his big frame, accidentally knocks into her into the well. She falls backward and almost plummets into the well but that her legs hold to the well's rim. Roscoe, aghast, apologizes as he helps her back up. After reassuming her seated position, she vehemently gives him a good whack in the face with her hand; to which he responds by bawling. Seeing that she's made him sad, Mabel immediately attempts to console him, and the two make up. This approximately *minute long* sequence ends with her putting her arms around the distraught Roscoe and saying (in effect) "There, there, it's o.k."

Mabel's father, Claude Normand, at one time was a small theater and club pianist, and all her life Mabel showed a conspicuous love and devotion to music,⁵⁶ and this is reflected overtly in a number of her films. In *Hot Stuff*, *A Strong Revenge*, and *Mabel Lost and Won*, we see her dancing; playing piano in *Troublesome Secretaries*, and singing *Caught in A Cabaret*. Like Chaplin, the mutability of her gestures and emotions has a pronounced musical quality, with her exaggerated gestures and movements on screen subtly synchronized to and with deeper emotions she herself ostensibly feels within. A comparison might be to dancing in which a dancer's physical movements change to the movement and beat of the melody and rhythm, and, with respect to acting on screen, as if she were "dancing" to the succession of action and emotions in a given scene. This is easier to grasp when we realize that there might be performing musicians, for example violinists, banjo, and piano players, etc., present when a film was being shot.⁵⁷ Music accompanying filming, however, was only made standard practice by the time of the later Goldwyn and Sennett features, and could not always be had at Keystone except when filming indoors.⁵⁸

Her Technique

Mabel Normand's basic screen technique (as opposed to her "art"), as found in her slapstick films, also involved two essential aspects:

1. Physical gestures
2. Facial expressions

A simple, general listing suffices to give us a good idea of the kind of comic mime technique she had at her disposal; bearing in mind that each of these gestures or expression is not infrequently used in conjunction with one or more of the others.

1.) Physical gestures:

⁵⁵ Ford Sterling and Arbuckle were adept in this department as well, and did not lag far behind; but with the crucial difference that neither was especially gifted at conveying sorrow or pathos.

⁵⁶ For more about Mabel and music see pieces in *Motion Picture Magazine*, Oct. 1915, *Los Angeles*, Sept. 12, 1919, *Dramatic Mirror*, June 19, 1920, *Gary Post Tribune*, Feb. 3, 1922 contained in this volume.

⁵⁷ Chester Conklin: "Mr. Sennett learned how to pace his time, by humming music as the action was filmed. D.W. Griffith, who was Mr. Sennett's teacher, hummed and filmed at the same time. Indoor shots always were done with music -- a piano player, who had to be aware when the sequence began and ended. It saved film, which Mr. Sennett liked because film stock wasn't cheap, and he was very thrifty." *Keystone Krowd* by Stuart Oderman p. 47.

⁵⁸ Sennett: "She insisted on working on a stage to the accompaniment of the loudest jazz syncopation the record library could provide. Other actresses, particularly such dramatic stars as Mae Marsh, Mary Garden, the opera star, Madge Kennedy, Marie Doro, Maxine Elliott and Jane Cowl, were put in the proper mood by the sobbing of soft violins. Not Mabel. She wanted action. Wherever she was, there was action." *King of Comedy* p. 208.

* Leaning forward and shaking her fist or pointing her finger (as if threatening vengeance)

* Clapping her hands together (to say “oh my”)

* In *Fatty and Mabel at the San Diego Exposition*, in a fit of vengeful rage, she spits into her hands and rubs them together as if to show that she’s going to “give it” to Roscoe when she gets her hands on him. See also *Mabel’s Busy Day*.

* Putting her hand into her hair, throwing her head back in utter consternation

* Fluttering her hat in quick, rhythmic palpitation out of excitement or unfounded dread -- see *Fatty and Mabel’s Married Life*, and *Fatty and Mabel’s Simple Life*

2.) Facial Expressions:

* Disdainful pouting

* Crying or weeping, with accompanying heaving chest

* Smiling, energetic glee

* Mimicking (in an exaggerated or ridiculous way) someone else’s anger or fuddy-duddy disposition.

* Receiving a blackberry pie in the face and crossing her eyes as she looks up

* Making a small circle with her mouth, much like Betty Boop, in a moment of surprise, shock or dismay

* Winking her eye knowingly (as if to say “exactly!” or “you get it?”)

* Looking coyly or skeptically off to the side

* Eyes looking up to heaven (perhaps crossed also) when distraught (as if to say “why me?”)

One device Mabel employed, as pointed out by Sam Peebles, in *Classic Film Collector*, Aug. 1970, is the screen aside. With this, she would look into the camera and make some kind of facial comment about the action taking place, similar to a stage actor’s aside (to the audience.) Films where we find this include *Tomboy Bessie*, *Mabel’s Married Life*, *Fatty and Mabel’s Simple Life* and *Wished on Mabel*.

For all the fun she created and displayed, Mabel took what she did seriously and usually with affectionate enthusiasm. On screen she is typically very energetic, and this energy tends to inspire and impart itself to those with and around her. She often acts in such a way, usually on films made within the studio, that one can, with little difficulty, imagine a lively audience cheering her on. Somewhat similarly, she is sometimes like a child at play. In *Katchem Kate*, for instance, she portrays a junior detective who disguises herself as one of a band of male outlaws, and the effect is one of an imaginative child playing “cops and robbers” or “cowboys and Indians.”

A WORD ABOUT THE STUNTS

“I have had to dive and swim in rough ocean scenes. I have fought with bears, fallen out of a rapidly moving automobile, jumped off a second story roof into a flower bed and risked life, limb and peace of mind in innumerable ways -- and all to make people laugh. Some work days I have gone home and cried with ache in body and heart and at the very moment of my misery thousands of theater-goers were rocking in their seats with laughter at some few scenes in which I had worked a few weeks before.

“But the heart-breaking scenes are not everyday occurrences. In many of the pictures the parts we play we love just as much as the audiences that see the finished product exhibited. There is the sweet and the bitter, much the same as in any other profession or business in which a girl makes her living.”⁵⁹

There is some controversy about which, if any, of her stunts prior to 1916 Mabel used a double for. Although Sennett’s thriftiness alone might suggest or attest Mabel did most of them herself, both tradition and the extant films themselves also do or seem to support this inference. The following are a list of some of these:

⁵⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 1, 1916.

Dives off rock cliff into a river -- *The Squaw's Love*
 Flies aloft in a Curtiss-Pusher 1913 vintage aircraft -- *A Dash Through the Clouds*
 Dives off pier -- *The Diving Girl, The Water Nymph*
 Rides a fast horse -- *Cohen Saves the Flag*
 Is tied to railroad track with oncoming locomotive approaching -- *Barney Oldfield's Race for a Life*
 Engages in brick-throwing fights -- *A Muddy Romance, Mabel at the Wheel*
 Is dragged through the mud while hanging onto a rope -- *A Muddy Romance*
 Goes up alone in a hot air balloon -- *Mabel's New Hero*
 Rides tandem with Chaplin on motorcycle -- *Mabel at the Wheel*
 Drives an auto racing car -- *Mabel at the Wheel*
 Flies up in the air after her auto mobile explodes, then lands hanging by her hands from a tree limb -- *Fatty and Mabel's Simple Life*
 Dives off bridge -- *The Little Teacher*
 Is tied to a rock in the ocean -- *My Valet*
 Rests atop a house floating at sea -- *Fatty and Mabel Adrift*

There are a few anecdotes related of Mabel pulling pranks in real life, such as when she reportedly tormented Nick Cogley with smoking smudge pots as he attempt to convalesce at home while recuperating from a leg injury⁶⁰ -- which show that she herself was (at least in her younger days) not above playing roughly. As well, it is common to come across accounts or claims of her using bad language. Presumably there is some truth behind both of these kinds of stories and reminiscences -- but exactly how much is easily exaggerated and difficult now to say. Of note in this regard, Oderman quotes the following.

“*Chester Conklin*: Gloria [Swanson] thought Mabel was rude and coarse.

“*Minta Durfee*: Mabel was not coarse, and she was not vulgar. She was fun. All the time. It was Gloria who saw herself as a great tragedienne.”⁶¹

On Screen with Other Famous Laugh-Makers

CHAPLIN

“What a lovely memory it is! How the great genius of today crept, humble and discouraged, into my bungalow and told me his dreams and listened to mine; how we planned bits of business and little mannerism's; how he decided to develop the queer shuffling little walk of an old coster-monger he once saw in Whitechapel -- the famous Chaplin walk with the big shoes and little skip and hop when he turned aside.

“Nappy (Mack Sennett) turned him over to me and I directed several of his pictures, in some of which I also played. And while it would be folly and untrue for me to say I am responsible for very much of his present standing as the screen artist beyond compare, yet I'm proud to say that he held my hand while he found his way through the swamp of learning the game. That Charlie is prompt to acknowledge the strength he found in my arm is one of the happy spots in my life.”⁶²

Until the arrival of Chaplin at Keystone in early 1914, she was without a screen co-star who could artistically rival her when it came to character probing, finer shading, and depth. Mabel's screen gesture's and mannerisms are usually more subtle and understated than either Sterling's and Sennett's. Although Sterling, who worked in the circus before entering films, is sometimes brushed aside as a comedian who overacted, he was actually (or could be) a devastating mimic and was capable of a wide and quite amusing range of facial expressions, as well as not a few eloquently comical *acrobatic* feats. And in providing a bouncing energy that livened up the proceedings, he could be quite hilarious, even perfect, in a slapstick film. “Mabel's” grabbing an attacker's hand (usually that of a masher) and biting it was evidently a piece of comedy taken from him.⁶³ Unfortunately, however, the Keystone assembly line way of

⁶⁰ Recounted in Gene Fowler's *Father Goose* pp. 215-217.

⁶¹ *Keystone Krowd* p. 48.

⁶² “Madcap Mabel Normand,” Part II, *Liberty*, Sept. 13, 1930.

⁶³ Though in the Biograph *drama* “The Telephone Girl and the Lady” (1913), Mae Marsh is seen using the same canine tactic to help fight off a burglar; as well, Max Linder was, of course, known for similar antics.

doing things is too frequently reflected in the quality of his performances, and it was in part and perhaps in recognition of Sterling talent suffering for this reason that Chaplin later demanded for himself greater control over his own films.⁶⁴ Sennett as comedian could be amusing but only if used in small doses; otherwise he could soon become tiresome. Fred Mace, on the other hand, was (at least at that time) more comically adept and had a greater emotional range than Sennett. Yet he did not make for a good romantic comic lead (so often required in the stories) or a very convincing villain, and was typically cast incidentally as a fatherly or bumbling elderly type; such as in *Bangville Police* – perhaps his best surviving Keystone short.⁶⁵

There's not much special chemistry between players because there is rarely little nicety or subtlety on the part of the male players. A film like *The Ragtime Band* (1913), for example, is excellent, but it is a comedy that doesn't require very much or special interaction between leads Normand and Sterling. While the performances are both good, they are not really dependent on each other. Later, Arbuckle was a considerable improvement over Sennett and Sterling as a comic leading man and interacting foil. Yet it was Chaplin alone, with his raw talent and sheer brilliance, who actually had it in his power to throw Mabel off balance and, as a result, cause her to feel less secure about her superiority.

Despite stories and accounts otherwise, Chaplin comes off as very self-confident in his first films. He may have been a shy person off the set, but on screen he apparently had little or no inhibitions. With Chaplin then, she was at last confronted with someone who was more than her match. At first, Mabel regarded the English newcomer as someone who needed her guidance. And Chaplin did learn much from her, including borrowing certain facial expressions, such as her look of pouting disdain. Yet as time went on, Mabel found that she herself could also benefit and draw from him similarly.

Sennett's biographer Gene Fowler makes the following perspicacious comparison between Chaplin and Mabel as comics: "Miss Normand has been likened to Charlie Chaplin. Despite the environment of slap-stick with the Ford Sterling genre of muscular comedy, Mabel had the inherent quality of Chaplin's grace and expression, his ability to represent pathos beneath the comic veneer. It is no slur on her craftsmanship to suggest that she lacked the masterly understatement which distinguished the performance of the Lime-house Garrick. Perhaps the fundamental difference between these gifted person was that Mabel's irrepressible personality dominated her art, whereas Chaplin's consummate art towered above his personality and bent it to the will of genius."⁶⁶

One of the biggest impacts Chaplin had on the Keystone films was that with his arrival the films became less of a group effort. His very clever, well defined and prepossessed Little Tramp stands out in stark contrast to the usual ensemble cast.⁶⁷ He seems almost always a step a head of everyone else in his ability to come up with a joke or sight gag, with even Mabel having to take a back seat much of the time.

Yet due to his marked individuality and foreign background, he was also deemed something of an outsider at Keystone; and, frankly, too much competition.⁶⁸ In fact, probably

⁶⁴ For a welcome, long overdue appreciation and more thoughtful assessment of Sterling, see Wendy Warwick White's *Ford Sterling: The Life and Films*.

⁶⁵ For more on Mace, see Marilyn Slater's online article at: <http://looking-for-mabel.webs.com/fredmace.htm>

⁶⁶ *Father Goose* p. 311.

⁶⁷ In the Biograph comedy *The Tragedy of A Dress Suit* (1912), which stars Ford Sterling and Mabel, there are some aspects of Sterling's character, both in appearance and gesture, which bear an uncanny resemblance to Chaplin's early tramp.

⁶⁸ In Keystone they would think up gags and situations and then compile them together as repertoire with which to build up or over a basic story framework; later occasionally improvising on and embellishing what they had thought of in advance. The difference with Chaplin was that he improvised a lot more, and had an increased awareness of all that was going around him. And aided and bolstered as he was by a non-stop energy to create while filming, he expanded on the original material and framework more than had been done previously. So that between Keystone and Chaplin, it wasn't so much a difference in kind as much as a *dramatic* difference in degree. Like Keystone, Chaplin resorts to certain stock formulas and mechanical devices -- in his case, and for instance, mimicking maudlin sentiment; satirizing his own tramp's pathos; exhibiting belligerent feistiness; smiling at the audience (i.e., the camera); acting with vehemence, sheer lunacy and kooky playfulness; while mistaking the meaning or significance of an event(s) taking place within the

his only and closest friends during his stay there were Ford Sterling and Mabel; both of whom were instrumental in their support of him during his first months as an unknown quantity at the studio.⁶⁹

In the films of 1914, there is a certain decline in her carefree appearance. One can sense some tension on Mabel's part, suggesting perhaps the possible strain of Chaplin's presence on both her work and then romantic relationship with Sennett, and there is more than a little ill-concealed playful flirting between Chaplin and herself in their films together. Interestingly, some audiences of the time (1915-1918) did tend to think of Chaplin and Mabel as a team; sometimes listing them side by side as among their favorite male and female comedians in movie magazine letters and polls.

The films Mabel made with him are, for a variety of reasons, fascinating to watch, and much of them, hold up very well as entertainment. Probably the best films they made together are *Mabel's Married Life*, *A Gentleman of Nerve*, *His Trysting Place*, and the feature *Tillie's Punctured Romance*.

Tillie's Punctured Romance, released November 14, 1914, was Sennett's big gamble at making the first feature length *comedy* film. At the time, movies were only beginning to gain acceptance by the public at large, and casting well-known stage-actress/comedienne, Marie Dressler, as central lead, was thought to be necessary to give the film the requisite respectability. Sennett then bought the rights to Dressler's previously successful stage play "Tillie's Nightmare" and placed Chaplin and Mabel in supporting roles.

One can't but have some strong mixed feelings about this film. The story line is unduly crass and insensitive, e.g., Tillie is the butt of most of the jokes without having much of any redeeming qualities about her. Though rescued by the Keystone Cops, and though Charlie, the swindler, and Mabel, the bad girl, get their comeuppance, Tillie loses her love and fortune, with nothing but the lesson gained. It is then a rather cynical comedy insofar as no one in the film ends up being happy, and Marie Dressler's simply getting kicked around as Tillie, while futilely trying to fight back (the film's central joke), shows rather poor taste and gets to be tiresome. Dressler herself, this being her first film, tends to over act, and this doesn't help. As well the picture is rather episodic and choppy, and camera movement non-existent.

Yet in spite of its flaws, "Tillie" has much going for it as a both enjoyable and, in its peculiar way, original film. Chaplin and Mabel, backed by an uniformly and energetic cast, give sparkling performances. Though it is somewhat discomfiting to see the two cast in the role of unabashed villains, albeit comic ones, their moments together are nevertheless quite pleasing, indeed something of a joy. In trying to bring join Keystone with the better known world of the stage, Sennett -- no doubt unintentionally -- created an almost surreal vision, merging Keystone roustabout with the theatrical world of the stage. Certainly there's no other feature like "Tillie," made before or since; which is a shame as far as Mabel's films go; since it is a vehicle that presented her in a unique comedic light. The film allows her to be a Keystone caricature while granting her more space to create more depth for herself. The world of Mabel's later features, by contrast, is much more conventional and realistic than the almost fantastical world of "Tillie." The high tempo of individual scenes seems to suit her performance well, and we can safely assume that musicians were regularly playing while scenes were being filmed; so rhythmically musical are the movements of the players.⁷⁰

film's story; all of which were ingredients both carefully and intuitively mixed and separated for purposes of coming up with numerous diverse and varied, as well as sometimes repeated and similar, performance results. In addition, Chaplin made for a wonderful, indeed perfect, clown -- in the circus sense of that title -- and as such was a master at directly appealing to audience sympathy; something rarely seen in Keystone films (though not entirely unknown, e.g., the affectionate petting of the calf in *The Bangville Police*.) And yet as the years, then decades, went by, Chaplin lost much of this energy, and though advancing as a craftsman, became less naturally funny as a comedian, and, as some have felt, perhaps was actually at his *comic* peak at Keystone and Essanay.

⁶⁹ *My Autobiography*, Charles Chaplin.

⁷⁰ Rob King in his *The Fun Factory: The Keystone Company and the Emergence of Mass Culture*, observes that Sennett in his earliest films tended to leave story behind for the sake of densely packing together individual gags and situations. This was understandably easier to do in the short films than in the later features; so that *Tillie*, in consequence of which and occupying a chronological place

ARBUCKLE

Notwithstanding his enormous size, Arbuckle did not dominate Mabel's films the way Chaplin did. This is in part because there was less friction between the two and since Arbuckle does not seem to have felt romantically toward Mabel in the way Chaplin did. One never thinks of Roscoe's "Fatty" deliberately pushing or kicking "Mabel" the way Chaplin's early tramp might. Roscoe and Mabel, rather, play together more as jolly comrades. Chaplin and Mabel, by contrast, had some degree of personal involvement and this affected their working screen relationship, both for bad and for good. Roscoe, on the other hand, generally approaches "Mabel" more deferentially, as if she were actually his sister, rather than as a potential screen rival or else object of off-screen affection.

Arbuckle was at Keystone a year prior Chaplin's arrival. During that time, he was much the innocent babe, and had not acquired that sometime leer in his look and manners that we can assume was not of much help years later when scandal hit. He was originally hired to replace Fred Mace, from whom he ostensibly acquired up a number of comic mannerisms. Mabel made quite a number of shorts with Roscoe; many of which are excellent one and two reelers, the first being *Passions He Had Three*, released June 5, 1913. When Chaplin, attracted by bigger money and the opportunity of an independent say over production control, departed Keystone for Essanay in 1915, Mabel and Roscoe were officially re-teamed for a special series together. Not that they had been completely apart all this while; only they had been making less films together due to more of her time being taken up with Chaplin's films.

By January 1915 when the "Fatty and Mabel" series commenced, production values had improved considerably at the studio. As for Mabel, she seems more noticeably confident and sure of herself on screen than previously. Yet simultaneously this further maturity tended to make her actions somewhat less spontaneous. Still, she is as pretty, if not prettier, than before. On this point, it is hard to say which specific film year between (and including) 1912 and 1916 that she most looks her best. For, though her appearance did naturally change over time, throughout her both very happy and (at the same time) turbulent life she almost always possessed a cheerful, affectionate quality about her. Pictures of her spanning these particular years evince steady emotional growth; yet most of the time she continues to evince a fresh, youthful air.

In the "Fatty and Mabel" films the two title characters have a proclivity for mischief, at the expense of conventional respectability, usually a Keystone Cop or one and or the other of "Mabel's" parents. In *Wished on Mabel* and *Mabel's Wilful Way*, "Mabel," at the park, runs away from her parents respectively to play with flirting Roscoe. Their ideas of fun include feeding a bear an ice cream cone, and going down an amusement park slide.

Yet "Fatty and Mabel" films, in fact, are somewhat risqué, even by later standards,³⁴ dealing as they do with marital infidelity, in particular *Mabel and Fatty's Wash Day*, *Mabel, Fatty and the Law*, *That Little Band of Gold*. This, of course, was nothing new itself, and went back to the Lumière and Pathé comedies of France. This plot device was also used in earlier Keystone in films like, *Mabel's Strategem*, *Mabel's Married Life*, *Getting Acquainted*. What is unusual in addition is that the philanderers are comic book "Fatty" and girlish "Mabel;" with their childlike qualities comically at odds with their more serious adult behavior. In *Wash Day* Roscoe plays with Mabel's undergarments on the clothes-line. As well in *Fatty and Mabel's Simple Life* there is a surprising sequence where she shoots milk from a cow's udder at him through a hole in a fence through which he is peeking. These gags reflect an openness and defiance which some would understandably have and did take exception to. Even so, I think one still finds Mabel or Arbuckle likeable, even though we don't especially care for the gag. Such ribald instances, in any case, are the exception. Most of what is in the 1915 Fatty and Mabel series is done in good taste, and is otherwise innocuous enough as family entertainment.

between the heyday of the shorts and the advent of features, manages to blend the two approaches in an unusually unique and memorable way.

After the Fatty and Mabel series, Mabel briefly had a new co-star in Owen Moore (Mary Pickford's former husband) who appeared with her in *Mabel Lost and Won* and *The Little Teacher*. Moore was a change from past co-stars insofar as he played a dapper leading man in contrast to the preposterous characters of Sterling, Chaplin and Arbuckle. This change also permits Mabel herself to be more ladylike and delicate. *The Little Teacher* is an odd three reeler which has her in the role of a school teacher minding a class of over grown, riotous school children (played by adults.) Though visually obstreperous with Arbuckle's and Sennet in the cast, *The Little Teacher* still manages to be calm and pleasant in parts with Mabel playing the more placid part of a country school marm.

In the summer of 1915, Sennett and the Keystone company, as part of the New York Motion Picture Company, and in partnership with D. W. Griffith and Thomas Ince became part of the New York City based Triangle Picture Corporation. The formation of Triangle Corporation was a calculated and well-mounted effort to improve the quality of films, while at the same time attempting to more strictly dominate distribution and exhibition -- a scheme which proved a fiasco and financial failure, yet which ironically and notwithstanding became the organizational model and ideal for Hollywood's subsequent studio system. The Keystone comedies made in this interval consequently then became known as Triangle-Keystone films.

Mabel made five films for Triangle-Keystone, *My Valet*, *Stolen Magic*, *Fatty and Mabel Adrift*, *He Did and He Didn't*, and *The Bright Lights*. Three of these films, *My Valet*, *Fatty and Mabel Adrift* and *He Did and He Didn't*, are known to survive and all are exceptional for their relatively lavish production values. *My Valet* features, popular stage actor-comedian gone Hollywood, Raymond Hitchcock. He in turn is supported by Sennett, Mabel, and Fred Mace, the latter having returned to Keystone after his unhappy independent venture. It was one of the first films put out by the Triangle company and proved to be something of a minor box office success.⁷¹

Not everything, though, had worked towards the better. In 1915, Mabel had gone through at least two very serious mishaps: one involving a severe head injury she accidentally received, allegedly at the hands of Mae Busch, and, the other, her reported (and related) break-up with Mack Sennett. By 1916, she appears more pallid than before. Although she's retains her loveliness, the luminous gleam of youth has already started to fade. Yet if by 1916 Mabel had already begun to look drawn and weary, so as well, of course, had the world itself.

The last three films she made for Keystone, and her last as well with Arbuckle, were high budget two and three reels. Two of these, *Fatty and Mabel Adrift* and *He Did and He Didn't* are memorable films and represent the polished culmination of the two stars' auspicious teaming together. *Fatty and Mabel Adrift* is one of the most well-known of Mabel's films, and one most frequently replayed for audiences. Its welcome reception over all the years speaks as well as any critic's praise could with respect to its appeal and long standing merit. *He Did and He Didn't* is very much unlike anything else Arbuckle or Mabel had appeared in up to this time, and one is hard put to call it a comedy. The story is one that could scarcely else be told except through the medium of film; due to its use of a dream sequence of *two* of its characters. In this somewhat somber and unusual film, Mabel plays the wife of affluent doctor, Arbuckle. An old childhood beau of Mabel's, William Jefferson, stays for dinner and the night, with the result that unvoiced feelings of jealousy are aroused in Arbuckle. *He Did and He Didn't* then involves dream sequences which the viewer at first is lead to believe represent reality. Roscoe in a fit of jealous rage strangles Mabel. Thinking her dead, he leaves the room. She awakes and taking a pistol fires at him as he goes down stairs. It turns out, however, that this is all a kind of ludicrous nightmare that both Arbuckle's and Jefferson's characters are having simultaneously. It ends with everybody being alive and well, and Mabel found to be sleeping soundly and snugly in her (separate) bed, unaware of all that has transpired. Addressing the theme of jealousy in a more serious way as it does, the film may have been an indirect

⁷¹ The George Eastman House, in Rochester, New York possesses a nitrate print of *My Valet*.

statement by Arbuckle on Mabel and Sennett's romantic falling out. It is largely more eerie than comic, and, in retrospect, becomes more so when we recall the harsh difficulties that would in later years distress both Mabel and Roscoe. Suffice then to say, it is a very strange, if novel, film.

Becoming ultimately disenchanted by Sennett, his demanding production methods, and what indeed might perhaps be characterized as his narrow minded oversight, Mabel removed herself from Keystone in early Spring 1916. Over the half decade and perhaps unintentionally, Sennett had grown to take her for granted, both personally and professionally. It was only when she and other stars had left that he was forced to take reckoning of his questionable handling of his main players. He subsequently lured Mabel back by offering her her own picture company and studio. The result was the feature *Mickey* and that in due time turned out to be a surprise runaway hit. With its release, as well as that of a number of Goldwyn pictures, the days of Keystone Mabel drew to a close, while that of Mabel Normand, feature film star, had begun.

The personal romance of Mack and Mabel itself ended sometime back in 1915. And from then on Mabel made it plain that it would be strictly business between them. Yet while marriage between them wasn't to be, their *professional* marriage was, it could be said and as it turned out, a kind of triumph.⁷² For without Keystone, there perhaps would not likely have been that steady and glad tide of outstanding comedians spawned in the twenties and thirties. Keystone and its people, directly or indirectly, made possible the early careers of Chaplin, Arbuckle, Turpin, Keaton,⁷³ Lloyd, Charley Chase, Hal Roach, Our Gang (including the Little Rascals)...the list goes on and on. And without Mabel, it is not likely Sennett would have had any Keystone. She, as much if not more so than himself, was the key ingredient to its comedic success; which, arguably, is why Keystone effectively folded when she left. *Creatively* and *artistically*, Sennett himself largely borrowed from the work of others, perchance envisioning himself as the Belasco or Griffith of film comedy. He was clever, ambitious and, most of the time at least, had a good eye for picking out new talent.

Mabel Normand, however and when it came to spirit *and* inventiveness, was a true original.

⁷² Perhaps, it was precisely because their professional marriage in *comedy* was such a glorious success that actual marriage was impossible.

⁷³ It was Arbuckle who brought him into pictures; as Buster himself later proudly averred.

II. “Molly O’ ~ I Love You”

The Film Comedy and Drama of Mabel Normand: 1916-1927

“There is only one Mabel Normand. Consequently, there is nothing to compare her with. If you like her you like her, and if you don’t, you don’t. In the latter taste, you are indeed to be pitied if you find yourself compelled to sit through a Mabel Normand picture. Luckily there are few members of the screen loving public who don’t like Mabel, and their number is becoming less all the time. Anyone who can sit through ‘Jinx’ and come away without profound respect for Miss Normand’s comedy ability, is indeed exceptional...Obviously such a story as this is not sufficient to entertain even the most simple minded audience without mammoth assistance from the cast. In this case the cast is ninety-nine per cent Mabel Normand.”⁷⁴

Normally speaking -- though not in quite all instances (thinking of “Molly O’” and perhaps also “The Extra Girl”) -- if one took a Mabel Normand feature and left out Mabel Normand, one would be hard pressed to imagine such a film as anything more than, at best, entertaining amusement, or else a historical curiosity. However, with her in it a spirit and warmth are breathed into the cast and story, and which sometimes even takes the film to greater heights of purpose and meaning. Moreover, and whether intended or not, the real life drama of Mabel Normand’s life, now as then, also lends her pictures an added dimension of interest. While it is mete to lament what might have been, there is, nevertheless, a fruitful legacy to her later films; that one can go back to time and again and be rewarded with; for there are not infrequent demonstrations in these feature films of natural and unaffected genius. At her best, which admittedly is not always, Mabel achieves an eloquent synthesis of witty thought (say, for example, about human behavior) and deeper emotion that still resonates clearly and lucidly despite the lapse of many years.

Just recently of this writing, appreciation of Mabel’s post-Keystone and Triangle efforts has been signally advanced by the fortuitous resurfacing of the Sennett features *Molly O’* and *Suzanna*, as well as a handful of her Goldwyn pictures. If scholars could not previously make a more full and proper sense of Mabel’s contributions, it was understandable, given the absence of these crucial films. Now, however, that *Molly O’*, *Suzanna*, and some heretofore lost Goldwyn films are available again, it is possible to finally view the later Mabel Normand and her work in a much better informed and more accurate light.

As far as plots go, Mabel’s Goldwyn and Sennett features are not only formulaic, but even unabashedly so; particularly the Sennett films where it could be fairly said the story ideas are recycled with frugal conscientiousness. These films say, in effect, “let’s have fun with this same old plot line or routine.” Somewhat surprisingly, at times this approach works. At other times, it asks too much of audiences already familiar with it. In any case, and as with many “star” vehicles, Mabel herself really is the show, and this itself distracts us from taking the story of itself very seriously. There is relatively little focus on plot in these films, and really they are usually an opportunity for Mabel and the cast to go through given scenes especially designed to best bring out their talents, and or else give them an opportunity to run through some odd gag, stunt, or routine. *Mickey* has probably the most interesting story of her later features. But even there the story not infrequently takes a back seat to some tenuously related bold action sequence or risible antics.

Cinderella is a common thread among the different story lines utilized. Yet these films will often arise above the mere fairy tale in that there is frequently a real, down-to-earth sympathy for the working girl, and common people in general; a concern Mabel showed both on screen and off. To miss this would be to overlook one of the most very important aspects of Mabel’s later films (both features and shorts.) So when she played the slavey, she was not merely re-doing Cinderella before the ball, but, as well, she took the occasion to bring attention to some of society’s voiceless and forgotten. She empathizes with and celebrates their struggles, hopes, and dreams of happiness. While her approach might perhaps not be so

⁷⁴ *Dramatic Mirror*, February 7, 1920.

sophisticated as to please all tastes, the sincerity of that compassion itself is hardly to be questioned.

Until Mabel appeared on the scene, a female performer who *regularly* acted as comedienne and who was also pretty was something rarely as yet known. Most “comic” actresses of the time were really serious actresses who sometimes did comedy – Mary Pickford being a perfect example.⁷⁵ Attractive girls certainly might do comedic roles, but classing them *primarily* as comediennes was relatively unknown. Louise Fazenda, for example, was one very pretty female who worked at Keystone. Yet in order for her to be playing comic roles frequently it was decided that she needed to be made up to look like an ungainly hick. While Mabel herself was sometimes similarly made up to look unappealing, this was the exception, and most the time it was her prettiness that was capitalized on. Among beautiful actresses then, she was a pioneer of sorts in that her fame rested almost entirely on her comedy work, and some of her immediate successors included Edna Purviance, Fay Tincher, and Clara Bow. When hired by Goldwyn, she wanted at that time to take on more dramatic roles. However, her audience, in reaction to tentative efforts in this direction on her and Goldwyn’s part, simply would not have it, and from thereon if there was going to be any serious drama in her films this would have to be counter-balanced with an equal or greater amount of comedy.

There is usually not much continuity in a given performance. Rather Mabel shines or doesn’t shine in individual scenes – speaking more with respect to herself really rather than the character she’s supposed to be playing. While she could indeed be fine actress when drama was called for, we can never get around the fact that we are watching Mabel Normand the film star. There is ever present her own inimitable and engaging personality regardless of the character; such that the story being played not infrequently takes on secondary importance amid such a distraction. Even so, while we might not be won over to the believability of a given character she plays, there will often be times when we will be illuminated and or made to laugh with respect to some insightful truth about individual people or (some of) the human condition generally.⁷⁶

Unlike Mabel of the early years, Mabel Normand of the Goldwyn, Sennett features, and Roach shorts usually thinks carefully before she acts. This makes for a quite different kind of comedy than at Keystone. This change was prompted by a desire to take both her life and career in a new direction reinforced by more or less involuntary external factors. With respect to the latter are the trying, real life events which were going on when these films were made. Health problems, some measure (albeit not specifically known) drug use, a purported miscarriage, two major scandals, antipathy of some of the press, all, in some measure, make themselves often felt in these films (and including stills of films lost.) The later Mabel, her cheeks drawn, is clearly more wan and stiff in her movements than Biograph and Keystone Mabel. There are even occasions when she obviously appears to be in great emotional distress that bears little or no relation to what is going on in a given scene. Caught in those moments where she does not look well, we sometimes find ourselves in the odd circumstance of waiting for her to “be on.” Fortunately, our hope is (usually) rewarded soon enough; though sometimes not as soon or readily as we would like. To complicate things further, it would often be a mistake to say Mabel is one way or the other in her demeanor, even in an isolated series of moments. It is challenging for a historian or reviewer to depict with words her looks because

⁷⁵ There is an unmistakable likeness in the gestures, styles and brand of comedy of post-Keystone Mabel Normand and Mary Pickford. And while Mary ostensibly, if only out of respect and affection, took from some of Mabel’s gags and comic methods, Mabel, by comparison and in her post 1916 feature films, drew much more from Mary – indeed, so much so that it appears Mabel at times is outright mimicking her. Why this artistic subservience on Mabel’s part may simply have arose out of deference to Mary’s own genius (and with imitation being the best form of flattery), and or else Mabel and or her producers adopted this approach with the idea of it being a winning, and exhibitor pleasing, formula. In retrospect, of course, this seems a mistake and now we wish Mabel could or would have been able to strike it out more on her own artistically. Yet such overt emulation by film stars of their more well known peers, in any case, was not uncommon at the time, and even Douglas Fairbanks in his films, for instance, not infrequently imitated Charlie Chaplin (as say when Fairbanks thumps his chest or comedically bounces about against screen villains or adversaries.)

⁷⁶ Later Hollywood actress Natalie Wood has been often quoted as saying how much she sought to be a finer actress rather than a mere screen personality. And yet it is possible for a performer, such as Ms. Wood proved herself, to use their personality in a way that can enhance and make more lively the proceedings on screen – not least of which when that personality is (in a given instance) noticeably more interesting than the material they are performing.

sometimes she can both be a certain way, while at the same time its opposite. For example, her health might not be well, and she looks pale and worn. Yet in her joking or passion she still manages to retain a certain piquancy and freshness. No wonder then, in his autobiography, and with respect to this period of her career, Sennett himself (in his autobiography) confessed some difficulty in trying to describe her.

Audiences, as we know, often love a film star, and, indeed, may love that film star greatly. Yet it is something even more when they actually *fall in love* with them. To understand Mabel Normand the film star, it is necessary to understand that much of her male audience actually did fall in love with her; just as they might fall in love with a childhood sweetheart. According to their respective memoirs, both Charlie Chaplin and King Vidor only seriously considered going into films after first seeing and being infatuated with Mabel on screen. And for every Chaplin and Vidor, how many lesser-knowns, and unknowns -- including the likes of Horace Greer -- were there? Time and again, in popular movie journalism and the films themselves, there are expressions of pronounced and strong liking for her; which bespeak more than mere or ordinary fan enthusiasm. When Mabel in *Molly O'* gives a big smack to Albert Hackett, playing her brother, it ostensibly is also a kiss to some of the thousands of her audience who were to some degree or other actually felt this way toward her. Young women, as well, were taken by her, though in a different way; seeing in her a model of feminine beauty and emancipation worthy of emulating. Sadly, however, the ensuing scandals and changing tempers of the times considerably complicated and confused this state of things; so that later, many, who had originally adored or were previously entranced with her, callously turned their backs when the storms of doubt and controversy blew.

Mickey

Aside from *Tillie's Punctured Romance*, *Mickey* is arguably the most memorable and enduring of Mabel's feature films, both with respect to her performance and the film itself, and over the passing years, one grows to better appreciate what a unique and uplifting work it is. This is due to its being made, for the most part, prior to the severe heartaches and travails, both personal and public, which ultimately undid her. The exception, of course, is her break up with Sennett in 1915, and injuries reportedly stemming from that event. The strains from these, as well as whooping cough she suffered from during the making of *Mickey*, do at times show. Yet unlike the other later features, the effects of these misfortunes and ailments is not so great that they markedly detract from our being able to enjoy the story and relate to its characters on their own level. Mickey, as the film's main character is arguably Mabel's best feature film portrayal, and certainly the most believable one within the context of the story presented.⁷⁷ Though the plot at times does wander,⁷⁸ the film nevertheless is consistently emphatic in its sentiments of natural over artificial; of generosity over greed; of humility over (false) pride; of youth over age, and heart over calculation -- with a bit of Puck thrown in.

The conceptual origin for the character of Mickey arguably stems from Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn,⁷⁹ with the significance difference, of course, that this is a female Huck. As well, the character of Mickey may also have been inspired by the kind of urchin roles Mary Pickford and Marguerite Clark were playing -- certainly Mabel had Pickford in mind while performing much of the role as, for example, we see in Mickey's sunny and affectionate disposition. Although Anita Loos wrote the original working scenario, director F. Richard Jones, with input from Mabel, heavily modified it during production, and shaped Mickey to be just as they wanted her.

Although with whom exactly the idea originated with is not entirely clear, Mabel, in the early part of the picture, very noticeably wears a long-curled hairstyle like Pickford's and oversized shoes like Chaplin's. Clearly something of a tribute to them is intended by this;

⁷⁷ By contrast, in most of the later films we tend more to see *Mabel Normand* rather than the character she is playing.

⁷⁸ The present version of *Mickey* that is available was reportedly given its final editing by a states rights film distributor in New York.

⁷⁹ Whose origin in turn can be traced to Yan Yost Vanderscamp in Washington Irving's "Guests from Gibbet Island."

which is appropriate because, again, the character of Mickey, in certain ways, is something of a take off on the kind of spunky tomboy Pickford played in films like *Tess of the Storm Country*, and Chaplin's antic loving tramp. At the same time, the pathos she strives for and achieves is to some extent presumably influenced by Chaplin's work; though *Mickey* was completed four years before Chaplin began work on his first solo starring feature, *The Kid*.

Mickey is nature's wild, untamed beauty. She swims seemingly naked in a forest lake,⁸⁰ but is modest, even somewhat bashful, when it comes to things romantic. At one point, Thornhill, a handsome mine-owner and surveyor (played by Wheeler Oakman), visits the wooded mining hills where she resides. In the course of getting to know her, he tries to kiss her on the mouth. Mickey, although ostensibly enamored of him, turns away embarrassed. He then, very tenderly, kisses her on the wrist instead. Later and after he's left, Mickey, with a smile almost as wide as her face, sits on a fence alongside Minnie, her old Indian step-mother, and carefully relates to Minnie how he had kissed her wrist. She expresses how her own heart beats madly -- making a gesture conveying idea this by clapping her wrists together -- because she is in love with him. Minnie's look of thoughtful gravity, as she listens puffing on her corn-cob pipe, makes for a humorous contrast. Mickey, amused by her quiet reaction, then in an outburst of laughter throws her arms around Minnie in a great hug.

In sequences like this, great advantage is taken of the slightest movements; which is an approach Chaplin himself, of course, utilized. In one scene, Mickey feeling the wrath of her good hearted but brutal step-father, goes to steal the belt he, ostensibly and by inference, sometimes beats hits her with. What we see is the belt hanging on the wall; when suddenly a hand followed by an arm comes out from behind the window curtain, and with a personality all its own surreptitiously dances up to the belt, grabs and absconds with it. The scene is otherwise very simple: a hand, followed by a full-length arm, comes through a window and grabs a belt hanging off the wall. Yet because of the way it is done, the action helps to impart the character of Mickey in a way that goes beyond the mere insertion of the incident for plot reasons. In watching and re-watching the film, one is struck time and again how by Mabel's small gestures and mannerisms bring added life to what are otherwise often fairly routine scenes. She can, for instance, be eloquent even in just the way she stands.

Mickey's arrival from the west and her being ushered in at the mansion of her relatives is one particularly funny, yet touching sequence in this respect. We are at first smiling at her and her step-father's (played by George Nichols) awkwardness in the new surroundings. Yet this jocund atmosphere subsides into a believable sadness when they say their farewells; realizing that in future they will be far away from each other; with the suggestion that Mickey's days of wild innocence will perhaps be lost by her contact with "civilized" society. It a picture of innocence on the threshold of experience movingly realized by the two performers. Nichols, by the way, who had directed for both Griffith and Sennett, would continue to appear as the stern, husky father figure in all of Mabel's subsequent Sennett features.

Ironically enough, the subsequent scenes with Mabel as one of the mansion's house servant shows her for the first time not looking very well -- as if moving into society had made her ill. But, of course, Mabel herself was actually sick with whooping cough at the time these sequences were being shot, and the change in her appearance is quite overt. Comparing Mabel in her maid outfit in *Mickey* (while attending on Minta Durfee and Laura LaVarnie's characters) to Mabel as maid in *Tillie's Punctured Romance*, made only 2 years before, she almost looks like a different person. Although still attractive, her giddy radiance is observably less. This said, most of film she does look well enough. Yet even when she doesn't, this perhaps gains for her a little extra sympathy from the viewer.

Despite being green in the ways of the world, Mickey's rusticity and innocence are not of a naïve sort. As we might expect with many young people, there is a carefree sense of

⁸⁰ Actually, she is wearing a white bathing suit that gives the appearance at a distance of her being nude, and in a follow up sequence we see her with the bathing outfit in hand.

frolic, and even mischief, about her. Indeed, she is rebellious. While she is not so much malicious, her reactions to situations, nevertheless, sometime surprise us by their brashness. After being scolded for picking cherries off a cake sitting on a kitchen table, she quite defiantly smashes the cake with her fist. Likewise, after her rich relatives find out her stepfather's "Tomboy mine" has struck gold, they run to drag her off the leaving train to take her back to the mansion. As they finally are able force her to get into a car, Mickey sticks her tongue out at them: an act in remarkable contrast to, say, how young women were later portrayed on screen in the thirties.

Undoubtedly the most exciting, and famous scene in Mickey is the race-track segment. Learning that Reggie Drake (Lew Cody) is going to fix a horse race in order that, Thornhill (Drake's rival for Mickey's affections) will lose on a bet, Mickey secretly takes the place of the jockey and enters the equestrian event. So rather than the race being thrown, as Reggie Drake had secretly expected, Mickey rides the horse so well that she overtakes and leads the pack, much to the joy of onlookers, and to the dismay of Drake and his confidante. It is a rousing episode; made all the more thrilling by seeing Mabel herself intently ride the speeding mount to seeming victory. *Seeming* because her horse ultimately stumbles just before the finish line, and throws her to the ground. It is a puzzling moment because we otherwise naturally expected that she would have won, but evidently she doesn't. Yet while she fails to extricate Thornhill from his regrettable wager, the opportunity provides her with an occasion to demonstrate both her courage and devotion to him.

More confusing in terms of ordinary plot, but perhaps more credible in terms of ordinary life, we next see Mickey off on a friendly ride with Drake; "Much against her better judgment" as the title card states. From here, Drake lures her to a house where the intent of ravishing her is clearly implied. Notwithstanding, Thornhill who happens to be in the neighborhood sees Mickey crying for help and goes to rescue her. The fight and what follows is fairly predictable; except that here the villain gets the last best "smash" (using a chair) on his adversary. Even so, the hero is still able to retrieve the imperiled girl; and once again, as at the race-track, the villain is left with an otherwise hollow victory.

The final message of Mickey? For all its inexperience and recklessness, *spirited* youth has its own natural virtue; that at times can rise superior to the artificiality and hypocrisy of seemingly more wise adults. Typically and understandably, we think of Age instructing Youth about virtue. Yet here, as the film attempts to convey, it is possible for the reverse to be the case. As well, we have the also familiar theme of all that glitters is not gold; and sometimes that which doesn't glitter (i.e. to the unfeeling, conventional eye) actually *is* gold. These, of course, are not new messages, but the way, Mabel, Jones and cast are able to impart them *is* new, and beautifully expressed as well. Viewed in retrospect, the film might be reasonably characterized as folk art or in this case a sort of techno-folk art. Such works may seem formally crude and primitive, yet there is nonetheless something in them decidedly delightful and engaging. What the folk-artist might lack in formal schooling and more highly trained technical skill is more than compensated for by their enthusiasm, sincerity, and love -- much like Mickey herself.

The Goldwyn Films

By 1916-1917 and with the emphasis on features on the upswing, the raucous Keystone brand of slapstick was deemed to have passed its nadir, and was generally falling out of favor -- at least in certain circles of the industry if not with the public at large. Mabel herself reportedly had simply grown quite weary of it and was in search of something more slow in tempo. When she came to Samuel Goldwyn's company from Sennett, the original concept Goldwyn had in mind was to create a more elegant, genteel kind of comedy for her. And, this was the sort of thing Mabel also wanted. However, while working for him, and as reflected in films like *Peck's Bad Girl*, *The Jinx*, *Pinto*, this policy was relaxed or purposely disregarded, in light of the public's continued enthusiasm for the amiable hoyden they saw in *Mickey*. And

of course while slapstick films may have suffered a certain lapse in interest at that time, they ended up being revived with an even greater vigor in the ensuing 20's.

The following are the films Mabel made for the Goldwyn Corporation, grouped according to site of production (that is either Fort Lee, New Jersey or else Culver City, California), and listed with release date and director:

Ft. Lee, New Jersey:

Dodging a Million (Jan. 1918, director: George Loane Tucker), *The Floor Below* (Mar. 1918, dir: Clarence Badger⁸¹), *Joan of Plattsburg* (May 1918, dir: Tucker), *The Venus Model* (June 1918, dir: Badger), *Back to the Woods* (July 1918, dir: George Irving), *Peck's Bad Girl* (Sept. 1918, dir: Charles Giblyn), *A Perfect 36* (Oct. 1918, dir: Giblyn)

Culver City, California:

Sis Hopkins (Feb. 1919, dir: Badger), *The Pest* (Apr. 1919, dir: Christy Cabanne), *When Doctors Disagree* (May 1919, dir: Victor Schertzinger), *Upstairs* (Aug. 1919, dir: Schertzinger), *The Jinx* (Sept. 1919, dir: Schertzinger), *Pinto* (Feb. 1920, dir: Schertzinger), *The Slim Princess* (July 1920, dir: Schertzinger), *What Happened to Rosa* (Dec. 1920, dir: Schertzinger), *Head Over Heels* (April 1922, dir: Schertzinger)⁸²

Since leaving Sennett, Mabel had and was becoming more conscientious of herself as a formal artist, and in articles and interviews of the time she provides some intelligent observations on her work and film performance generally. Much of the best writing about Mabel and her art, both written by herself as well as by others writing on her behalf, comes from this period. As well, she continued to collaborate with her directors in coming up with gags and filming ideas; just as she had done at Keystone.

It was as well during this time of the late teens, unfortunately, that Mabel continued to have acute health concerns. To what extent this was the result of regular illness, drugs or something else is not entirely clear. In any event, her occasionally emaciated appearance bespeaks something clearly wrong with her. It is typically taken as given by some historians and casual scholars that her main problem was with narcotics. Yet assuming *there was* a drug problem, it is not at all necessarily the reason why she does not look well in a particular still. As mentioned previously, during production of *Mickey*, she had come down with serious whooping cough. Sometime, probably late 1919, she reportedly had an affair with Samuel Goldwyn and which was followed by a traumatizing, miscarried pregnancy. To all of this could be added what might be termed the general dissipation that it has been popularly reported afflicted many of the newly rich film stars, including, at least for a time, Mabel. The country itself, from 1918-1919, was sick with an influenza epidemic; with the war having rocked it psychologically as well. One should be cautious then in jumping to conclusions about what did or did not ail her at a given time. The available evidence on the subject of drugs and her illness is scanty, and is often times of dubious origin, little better than gossip (e.g., "Hugh Fay started her on the junk"), and or rarely specific. This is not to deny there was or might have been some point some drug problem; only we are not much now in a position to know its true character or what other factors may have been present to have caused Mabel's health to fail.

But that she was not well at most any given point during this period with *something* is itself not in question.

⁸¹ Clarence Badger would later direct Clara Bow in three of her most popular films: *It*, *Red Hair*, and *Three Weekends*. After first working for Lubin and Universal, Badger became a scenario editor and director for Keystone in October, 1915. In 1916 he directed the popular Gloria Swanson and Bobby Vernon comedies for Triangle, later going along with Sennett to Paramount in 1917, and then to Goldwyn in 1918.

⁸² The script-synopses for most of Mabel's Goldwyn films still exist, and can be found in the MGM Archives of the University of Southern California's Film Library, Special Collections.

Yet despite her not infrequently coming across in photographs as being unwell, and perhaps on occasion even looking rather strangely or confused in her expression, we are left with the seemingly conflicting fact that Mabel's Goldwyn films were usually well-received and got good box office -- indeed reportedly more so than just about anything else the Goldwyn company was issuing to its distributors. Much of the answer to this apparent anomaly could no doubt be found in the films themselves. Regrettably, only a few of these survive; namely *The Floor Below* (1918), *When Doctors Disagree* (1919), *What Happened to Rose* (1921), and *Head Over Heels* (1922). It might very well be possible to reconstruct a good deal of what Mabel was doing and what was going on in the other (now lost) Goldwyn films based on numerous stills, surviving scripts, and contemporary write-ups. Certainly such an inquiry would be an interesting kind of study, detective work, and restoration. However, for present exigency's sake, we will have to relegate this survey to three of the four that remain (with *When Doctors Disagree* on the shelf till if and ever it is restored.)

Directed by Clarence Badger, *The Floor Below* (1918) relates a not all that believable yarn about a girl "copy boy" at a newspaper office; who owing to some pranks, including shooting dice, manages, not surprisingly, to get herself discharged. As a way of allowing her to perhaps redeem herself, a reporter on the paper recruits her to help track down some thieves wanted by the police. In the course of her assignment and climbing up a fire escape to escape a cop who thinks she is a robber, she by accident falls into the apartment of Tom Moore; who plays a philanthropist missionary. He takes her for a burglar, and in effect she is adopted for purposes of reforming her. Of course, Moore already has a betrothed, but the latter, as might be expected, proves to be less than trustworthy or deserving, and in the course of time ends up being supplanted by Mabel as Moore's true love.

The opening portions of *The Floor Below* are less than satisfying, in part, given the less than credible circumstances of having Mabel as a trouble-making copy boy. And the plot itself otherwise and overall is not such as to be taken all that very seriously either; so that if the film fails to move us, it is because the action is unconvincing when it comes to mirroring anything real, or else, for that matter, because it doesn't do *much* to inspire us towards something ideal. This would have been less a fault if sufficient humor had been injected such that would excuse the far-fetched, and would-be fairy tale story. But unfortunately, that was not the case, and the film while engaging for a few scenes, can hardly be described as actually funny *or* uplifting.

On the positive side, wherever Mabel goes there is an unusual world created around her, and the film is at least delightful as a time capsule: breakfast with Mabel, and a quiet and cheery one at that; or a dinner party with her, or at charity fund-raiser held by some wealthy folk, etc. Her acting in spots is just too cutesy (the reviewer for *Variety*, though praising her, uses the phrase "cutey-cutey"⁸³) and affected. And yet in other instances, we get a few expressive and amusing close-ups. Goldwyn clearly was fêting her, and she must have felt welcome and happy for that, and yet there are moments where she slips into a sad look; perhaps reflecting on the (up to then) disappointment of *Mickey* (which would not be released till August of that year) and her having recently had to up-root from her life and friends in California; so that one gathers her feelings were probably mixed at the time. And to think, in light of all this, that Mabel had only just started in films (almost) a mere eight years earlier!

The second to last of her Goldwyn films, and released in Apr. 1921, *What Happened to Rosa* is an entertaining light comedy.⁸⁴ Like *The Floor Below*, in its time it probably passed for what we would today think of as a "sit-com."⁸⁵ Though fairly frivolous fun without pretension, it is not without its finer Goldwyn touches. Directed by Victor Schertzinger, who

⁸³ As per remarks in our Preface, is or can this be the same Mabel of *What Happened to Rosa* or *Molly O*?

⁸⁴ The title of the film, incidentally, is "*What Happened to Rosa*," not "*What Happened to Rosa?*" as is sometimes given.

⁸⁵ Mabel was initially making 6 reels films for Goldwyn. However, after making 2 this was reduced to a standard 5 reels, with the exception of *The Pest* and *The Slim Princess* which were 6 reels. The later Sennett pictures by contrast always ran from 6-7+ reels, though of course in terms of overall quantity of *feature* film footage, Mabel put out considerably more under her years working for Goldwyn, than afterward with Sennett.

supervised all of her later Goldwyn films,⁸⁶ the quasi-feature concerns a hum-drum department store employee, Mayme Ladd; who, after visiting a crank clairvoyant, in private imagines herself to be a mysterious Spanish beauty named Rosa Alvero. Mabel then is consequently furnished the unusual opportunity to play two distinct roles at once. In some respects, *What Happened to Rosa* is a more pleasant and enjoyable than her later Sennett endeavors because she, emotionally, is more light on her feet. Although noticeably more slow in acting and reacting than before, she is still fluid in her movements, and does not seem to be suffering from the off-screen distress that is so sorely apparent in subsequent films. Curiously, there is no obvious suggestion of any health problems in *Rosa* -- other than an overly glazed expression in one brief store-counter scene.

For first time in her films -- though by no means the last -- she comes across as too old for the part. Far from being convincing as a silly shop girl, Mabel more usually looks like the astute and worldly sophisticate she had become. Hence, her "Rosa Alvero" is considerably more convincing than her "Mayme Ladd." Mayme as a character is somewhat incoherent -- again largely because Mabel just seems too mature and experienced to be taken for a naïve girl -- a problem that was to mar most of her later films. Rosa, by contrast, is much more engaging and interest drawing. Moreover, the charm of the Rosa character is that she is not *merely* Rosa Alvero, but, more precisely -- and here's the nice distinction -- she is Mayme Ladd day-dreaming that she is Rosa Alvero.

We get some idea of how Mabel approached such roles and tried to *become* her character from contemporary articles she reputedly authored, as in this excerpt from one such:

"...here again we come to the root of humor that I mentioned before: being human. That's being natural. When I played the part of a poor little hoyden in one of my pictures -- 'Jinx' -- I tried to remember during the entire making of the production that I was a homeless little wretch grateful for kindness from anyone. In another picture I played the part of a little slavey who longed from the kitchen to reach the bliss of the grand ball-room upstairs. And when I reached there and played the part of a lady I tried not to forget that I had been a slavey a few moments before. Things puzzled me a little; I wasn't quite sure that what I did was the correct thing, but I was as good as the rest in my heart and proud of my clothes; oh, so very, very proud of my new, fashionable clothes!"⁸⁷

Similarly, two years later she wrote:

"Naturalness is the most important element in acting. To develop naturalness you must develop understanding of human nature. You must be able to determine just what a certain type of person would do in a certain situation.

"In 'Molly-O,' for instance, I was given the situation of a girl from the slums entering a beautiful and luxurious mansion. What would my feelings be as a washerwoman's daughter coming into a beautiful kitchen? I would be curious, of course, and very intent upon the surroundings. I must not affect curiosity, I must feel curious. Then I saw the serving man taking cakes from a box and placing them on a plate. They were very good looking cakes, and naturally I developed interest in them. I wanted one terribly. For a moment my conscience argued with my appetite. I argued the thing over to myself. Then, suddenly, my hand shot into the jar and I took one and stuffed it into my mouth as though doing it while my conscience wasn't looking. After the first cookie, the process was easier. I couldn't get enough of them. There were several emotions in conflict even in such a little scene.

"The conflict of conscience and appetite, the fear of being apprehended, the delight at the first taste of a delicious cake such as I never tasted before, and the feverish haste with which I secured more of them and secreted them about myself.

⁸⁶ Schertzingler had started out as a concert violinist, and originally came to films to write music scores for Thomas Ince. As a director, he incorporated his feel for music in his work, and it is this, no doubt, as much as anything else, that prompted Mabel to choose him as overseer of her films. For more, see Marilyn Slater at: <http://looking-for-mabel.webs.com/schertzingler.htm>

⁸⁷ *Dramatic Mirror*, June 19, 1920.

“It is very easy to do such things after the business has been thought out by the star and the director, but the important thing is to feel the impulses that prompt the action. You must place yourself entirely in the character’s place and feel exactly what she would feel in such a situation, otherwise your expression would fall short of realism and be nothing but ‘mugging.’ While watching an actress going through a scene on the screen, ask yourself whether or not you would do the things she does. If not, what would you do? How would you improve on her work? Wherein does her work ring false and why?”⁸⁸

Again and as stated, Mabel in *Rosa*, and for that matter most all of her subsequent films, is decidedly more slow to react. She is as pretty as ever, but her response to the comic circumstances is, to put it mildly, decidedly toned down and hesitant compared to “Keystone Mabel.” At times she looks simply bored. And while she still brings a down to earth sympathy to the role, the effervescent, vivifying Mabel of the Biograph and Keystone has effectively vanished.

Notwithstanding, the new Mabel is not without winning charms of her own. Again, playing Mayme imagining she’s Rosa Alvero gives her a superb occasion to shine, and in scenes that are sometimes both lyrically charming and wryly amusing; in particular the sequence where, alone in her bedroom, she imagines herself with Dr. Drew (played by Hugh Thompson); and the masquerade ball sequences. Masked Rosa, appearing with fan in hand, descending the staircase is perhaps as stunning and in its way exotic a grand entrance as was ever film. With wonderful lighting doing much to achieve the entrancing effect, the only material shortcoming of the sequence is its brevity.

On the regrettable side is a bizarre brawl with a street urchin, who understandably will not give up to her his clothes so Mayme can disguise herself. It’s absurd without being at all humorous, and merely serves to remind us that *crazy* does not always mean funny. As well, Mayme’s fawning on Doctor Drew -- to the bizarre extreme of attempting to get injured in an auto accident in order to see him(!)⁸⁹ -- is distasteful and demeaning -- again, without being all that funny. As always she is interesting to watch, but these last 15 minutes, though as likable as the rest of the film in its way, are too devoid of comic substance to be enjoyed or taken very seriously. Rather than the story being resolved, it fairly evaporates on us to meager or no dramatic purpose.

Fortunately, though, the film’s weaknesses are effectively offset by its strengths, and *Rosa*, unabashedly light fluff that it is, at least holds up well as an all around pleasing and diverting film.

Head Over Heels, although filmed in 1921, was not released till April 1922. Why the delay and why also it happened to come out not long after the Taylor case broke is open to speculation. Yet the explanation may simply be that its appearance was initially postponed in order to avoid confusion and competing with *Molly O’*; while to then, shortly afterward, allow it to continue laying around, getting cold, would only cause its marketability to decrease. To summarily conclude, therefore, and without direct evidence that Goldwyn was using the film to sell more tickets to cash in on the Taylor business, then, is unfair and assumes more than we positively know.

Although I myself have not had the opportunity to see *Head Over Heels*, Marilyn Slater, silent film researcher and archivist, not only was able to do the same, but, indeed, introduced the previous lost film (restored by the American Film Institute) to the audience at its re-release premiere (some 84 years subsequent to its original opening) at Cinecon 42 in Sept. 2006, at the Egyptian Theater in Hollywood. Upon then my asking, she most graciously agreed to share her own description and review of what she saw, and which then we quote as follows:

⁸⁸ *Movie Weekly*, March 18, 1922.

⁸⁹ This plot device is repeated in the later Roach film *Raggedy Rose* and with no better success.

“Mabel Normand shows her gymnastic skills as ‘Tina,’ the timid and ungainly trapeze artist found in Italy by Adolphe Menjou, who plays talent agent Sterling. Menjou telegraphed his New York partner, Lawson, played by Hugh Thompson to look for the acrobat star from Naples. Tina travels with her father played by Russ Powell. At the sophisticated New York office, Tina turned out to be not what the office was expecting. Rather, she was an unrefined peasant who created chaos and bedlam in a fabulous physical comedy routine; which includes her going through the transom to gain access to a private office and disturbing the well-ordered business. It was decided that perhaps with a makeover, they might be able to turn her into a movie star; so she is taken to a beauty parlor, with a number of sight-gags made use of along the way. Not so surprisingly, Hugh Thompson falls in love with her after her transformation.

“In the film there is a dream sequence where Mabel does an amusing *femme fatale*, who requests a very nervous stout ‘gentleman caller’ to roll her a cigarette, again and again, a funny gag. There are still-photos of Tina’s dream sequence showing her with a soldier; which shows her in the same scene but it is not in the AFI restoration.

“Mabel looks very thin and worn in this 5-reel film. In 1917 Mabel was the Samuel Goldwyn Studio’s biggest asset and most popular star. Goldwyn advertised her as the studio’s ‘cyclonic comedienne’ and she lived her life like a tornado, however by the time she is starring in *Head Over Heels* her acting has become uninspired, according to Paul Bern, who shared directing with Victor Schertzinger. This was a shadow of the Mabel Normand, audiences had come to value.

“As the re-telling of the ‘Ugly Duckling’ story unfolds, the little acrobat decides she wants both love and career, however, when she finds Lawson with an old girlfriend, Tina flies into a rage. After an astonishing fight with Lilyan Tashman at a Roof Garden, Tina plans to return to Italy. At the end she and Lawson come together and like all good fantasies the lovers live happy ever after.

“Mabel was transformed when her peasant character enters a beauty shop and exits a beautiful woman, visually showing the audience that there was a woman underneath the character that developed enough for the love that was fundamental to the plot. During the time this movie was made, Sam Goldwyn’s movies had high production values with boy gets girl and a happy ending. The tiny dynamo’s health was failing; this is sadly not Mabel at her best and the basic story was too simplistic for the force of her personality to carry the movie to success.

“In addition to Cinecon 42, it was screened at Slapsticon 3 that same year. Tommie Hicks, Jr. of Slapsticon, for his part, thought *Head Over Heels* well received (as it had, by the way, also been at the Hollywood screening); with Mabel still capable of creating a good rapport with the audience. A documentarian acquaintance of mine that also viewed it at that time writes: ‘*Head Over Heels* is by no means a great film, but better than it is given credit. While the story is flat there are some funny moments. I think Mabel’s acrobatics were well displayed and the film has some genuine laughs. I saw it in a theater that was pretty full and the audience, most of whom never heard of Mabel, seemed to enjoy it...the makeover scene was a nice farce/satire of how far women will go to look appealing. An interesting perspective.’”

Molly O’

“What Sam [Goldwyn] knew then, and what I didn’t know, was that Mabel’s cheeks were no longer as round as apples. She was thin. She photographed without her old time sparkle and bounce in recent pictures, not yet released which I had not seen. She was unhappy and ill and she looked it. We were amazed and upset when she reported for wardrobe tests.

“All those years of neglecting herself, of fun for fun’s sake, had left a mark on a girl who was after all was very small.

“She was still beautiful. Her eyes still laughed...

"Mabel was happy with the cast of Molly O', especially happy with Dick Jones...Both Dick and I had long talks about Mabel late at night in the tower office. Mabel wasn't the same. She was ill."⁹⁰

That "she was still beautiful" might sound like perfunctory politeness. Yet odd as it might seem, she was also still beautiful in spite of her being "unhappy and ill" -- which as well was true. Yet she is beautiful in a different way. She is even less vibrant and athletic,⁹¹ and more understated and hesitating than in the Goldwyn (let alone the Keystone) period. In addition, in *Molly O'* we for the first time see the *sad* Mabel Normand. This is all the more startling because this transformation occurs *before* either the Arbuckle or Taylor scandals had even taken place.

Naturally, it would seem to make sense to conclude that it was the alleged miscarriage referred to in Betty Fussell's book that brought about this despondency. How painful it must have been to have borne such a secret few of us can hardly guess. And mayhap her returning to Sennett was an act of contrition of sorts. As for Sennett, apparently uninformed as he was as to the "real" cause of her unhappiness, there is a certain sense in *Molly O'* that he is welcoming back the prodigal, although in a respectful and affectionate way. "Molly O' ~ I Love You" reads the title of the sheet music promoting the film; as if the once rejected lover was receiving once more in his arms the earlier lost sweetheart with whom "fast living" (presumably) had wrought havoc.

Molly O' was clearly intended to be a major effort by Sennett, and since it was the single film which in later years he wanted to re-do again, perhaps he thought of or hoped it would be his magnum opus.⁹²

The plot is less emotionally coherent than *Mickey*. Yet in its parts, *Molly O'* is often very touching and, albeit to a lesser extent, humorous. It has variety: light comedy, thrills, very serious drama -- everything *but* slapstick. Though the transition from the light comedy to serious drama is often handled awkwardly, and, much of the story fairly implausible, *Molly O'*, is, overall, a very rewarding film and, in moments, even powerful as a dramatic work. While its weaknesses are not to be brushed aside *too* casually, it, even so, it stands as a film of considerable and lasting merit. Director F. Richard Jones' and or photographer Homer Scott's use of camera angles, lighting, and close-ups, at the time, are usually uninspired. Yet Jones does have a knack for getting the most out of his players, and his orchestrating of scenes is often artful and imaginative. The very positive influence of D. W. Griffith, who had employed Jones just prior to *Molly O'*, is unmistakable, particularly in regard to the film's highlighting of common yet visceral and timeless moral issues.

Although she obviously is devoid of much of her earlier pep, Mabel and all the cast in their roles are about as much as one could ask for. George Nichols, back from *Mickey*, and who years earlier had also directed for Griffith (including screen versions of Ibsen and other notable authors), brings a professional intensity to his role. Lowell Sherman's⁹³ Fred Manchester is as suave a screen villain as one I sever likely to watch. Jack Mulhall, Eddie Gribbon, Jacqueline Logan, Albert Hackett, Anna Hernandez, Ben Deely also are aglow with verve and give appropriate support.

⁹⁰ Mack Sennett in *King of Comedy* pp. 221-222.

⁹¹ In one Goldwyn film, *The Venus Model* (1918), she sports a bathing suit.

⁹² "Molly O'" at the time was a familiar a nickname for a common Irish (or Irish born) working girl. The popular World War 1 song, "It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary," for example, has these lines:

"Paddy wrote a letter to his Irish Molly O,
Saying, if you should not receive it,
Write and let me know.
If I make mistakes in spelling,
Molly dear, said he,
Remember it's the pen that's bad,
Don't blame the blame on me."

⁹³ Sherman as well had played the seducing villain in D.W. Griffith's huge box-office success *Way Down East* earlier that same year.

As with her subsequent Sennett features, the story heavily relies on the Cinderella formula. Upper Class people (in a given instance rightly or wrongly) look down on poor Molly (Suzanna, or Sue Graham). Molly is in love with a young man who is someone of virtue, honor and courage. There are the usual stock characters: like the comic, tender-hearted mother figure, and the “other woman” with designs on the handsome young man. The villain pursues Molly (in this case amorously), and the well meaning but misguided, frowning father also threatens to ruin her perfect romance with the young man. But there is a fight and the film ends happily. All this, and Carl Stockdale as fairy godmother to boot!⁹⁴

Molly O’ is quite different from the traditional, medieval tale (or the fairy tale as it is usually known) in that it attempts to present the ordinary life of the lower class people in its harsh and unglamorous aspects. From the outset of the film, the poverty stricken tenement area and tension filled home in which the O’Dairs live is portrayed with almost documentary correctness. Not only does Molly come from a low income family, but she is the daughter of a washer-woman no less. The father, Tim O’Dair, for his part is a coarse and violent-tempered manual laborer, without the least bit of sentimentality about him. His junior work partner, Jimmy Smith, here comically played by Eddie Gribbon, is a cynical oaf he hopes to make his son-in-law without feeling it in the least necessary to consult Molly on the subject. To cap off the family portrait, her supportive younger brother, for all his good intentions, has a gambling addiction.

The villain and his accomplices are meaner and more callous than in *Mickey*. Though serving-maid Mickey is slapped by her cousin, Elsie Drake, for her disobedience, here Molly gets slapped by her father’s friend, Jimmy Smith, even though Smith had intended to marry her. By the same token, *Mickey’s* fun loving Reggie Drake is almost a “nice guy” compared to the cruel and methodical Fred Manchester. This heightened atmosphere flavored with violence could be said to disturbingly reflect both the tension left over from the War and the onset of the Prohibition era.

Yet for all the realistic touches, the story is still basically that of Brother’s Grimm mixed with some D.W. Griffith.

Although *Mickey* and the Goldwyn film *Joan of Plattsburg* did allow her room to do some serious drama, in *Molly O’*, more than ever before, Mabel has the opportunity to get into a role and situations with some real tragic possibilities. And but for her sometimes not looking well, she most of the time arises admirably to the occasion.

But coming into the role, there are some unavoidable difficulties. We mentioned previously her not looking well or happy. In addition to this, she is the internationally famous Mabel Normand -- 29 years -- old playing a laundry maid in her late teens or early twenties. As with *Rosa*, it is simply asking too much of an audiences to believe her in such a part. One interesting way, and with a certain amount of success, Mabel and Jones gets around this is that Molly is a bit of caricature. She is somewhat surreal the way Chaplin and some of the Keystone creations were surreal: absurd, exaggerated characters in an otherwise real life world -- though, here, without the slapstick. In the opening sequences of the film, one is perhaps at first disappointed because Mabel is not all that convincing, that is, if we expect her portrayal to be realistic. Yet if we see Molly, with her wide dark eyes, wide floppy hat, and long Pickfordian bangs and curls (like Mickey), as not unlike someone out of a comic strip, then we are able to accept her within the story, and the rest of the film can proceed smoothly on this basis.

Early on, Mabel has some pleasant, quiet scenes, such as one at a park bench where Molly finds herself “philosophizing” with the “silhouette man,” played by Carl Stockdale. Here, where the message “dreams come true for those who believe in them” is openly

⁹⁴ A title card in the film actually has Molly making a joking reference to this: “I feel like Cinderella only my fairy-godmother is a man.”

declared, Mabel charms with her usual genial warmth. Nonetheless, other than this particular scene, most of the first half of *Molly O'* (or what remains of it at least) is all fairly mechanical and serves mostly to set up the remainder of the story.⁹⁵ It is not nearly so effective as that portion running from the masquerade ball sequences to the end of the picture.

A public masquerade ball (in those days not so unusual an occurrence) is held for charity, in which members of the different social classes come together to dance and revel. Against her father's wishes, Molly sneaks off to attend the event dressed in a magnificent 18th century French-style court gown and wig (provided by the silhouette man.) Interestingly, the villain Manchester's costume is of that of an effete dandy of the same period, while the hero, Dr. Bryant, by contrast, wears something more in the way of a medieval prince. At one point, Molly, stumbling in what she thinks is a back lobby, suddenly finds herself on center stage. A curtain suddenly opens up from behind, revealing her to the delight and laughter of the gathered throng of masqueraders. There follows a resounding outpouring of affectionate applause and cheers, not so much it seems for Molly (the story character) but for Mabel herself. One palpably senses and feels their effusive love for her; making this, no doubt, for many the most magic scene in the film. Perhaps what causes this sequence to be especially moving, and perhaps might also be considered one of the real themes of *Molly O'* is – Mabel from her heart loves and cares for all; and all (i.e. those in the cast and production generally) in turn *love* Mabel. It is genuinely sweet, and not mawkish as it might sound, because the feelings of both are unmistakably sincere.

Molly, being mistaken for Dr. Bryant's fiancée (who is presently absent with her secret lover, played by Ben Deely), and Dr. Bryant are awarded as the most beautiful couple of the ball. All then are asked to unmask. In her own unveiling, Mabel is splendid -- there is clearly such a grand stir towards her -- again one feels it -- and she responds radiantly. It is a strange thing to try to describe, but a good analogy would be to a folded rose bud that, in a matter of moments, suddenly and wondrously bursts forth in glory (such as one might see with time-lapse photograph.) In this instance, it is Mabel's femininity and affectionate personality which blossom forth. The camera work, unfortunately, is rather flat. Otherwise it is one of the most memorable moments in all of her surviving films. The wonder, elation beaming from Mulhall's eyes, almost to tears, in reaction to her, is apparently more than mere acting.

Molly is in many ways a spirited, yet somewhat worldly-wise Pickford innocent. At one point Sennett offered the script of *Molly O'* to Pickford herself, who turned it down. Unlike the kind of young girl roles Mary Pickford is more commonly remembered for, Molly is to some extent allowed her sexuality; though the sexuality is suggested, without being in the least graphic or overt. It especially emerges in the form of a charming scene in which Dr. Bryant, after amorously strolling home with her from the masquerade ball, is about to depart as she ascends the threshold. As he is about to leave, she stands with her back against the door. He instantly returns and very tenderly kisses her forearm and that is bent outward upon the doorway. In sigh-filled trance, she permits the kiss; her womanhood (it could be said) having been woken within her. Just as Bryant departs, she turns aside and opens up her eyes to see her father glaring furiously at her. O'Dair then unleashes a violent tirade of anger and disgust. Nichols, as O'Dair, is more than convincing in the violence of his temper. So much so that one is tempted to wonder if his rage, almost to tears, may not, to some extent, have been inflamed by his (along with other people's) real life displeasure with Mabel; or more specifically, disapproval of Mabel's earlier life (of abandon) away from Sennett. Incurring the wrath of her father in this manner, Molly packs her things and leaves home.

Next morning, Tim O'Dair starts off hot after Molly, correctly surmising he will find her at Bryant's; and he is let in by the butler into the latter's affluent abode. With a pistol in his pants pocket,⁹⁶ and without giving notice of his presence, he finds Bryant shaving in the

⁹⁵ This maybe is too hasty a generalization as at least 1 reel of the extent footage is missing, and it comes from this earlier part of the film.

⁹⁶ This scene and O'Dair's stealthy entrance, incidentally, bear an eerie resemblance to what occurred in the Taylor murder only a few months anterior to the film's release.

bathroom. Molly, dressed in bathrobe and pajamas, kicks up her legs on a nearby bed. The father approaches Bryant from behind as if to sneak up on him. But Bryant, seeing him in the shaving mirror, is able to surprise him before he can shoot. A fist-fight ensues, with Mabel as onlooker giving a Lillian Gish in distress performance, her eyes rolling upward into her head. Bryant finally knocks O'Dair flat, and it is revealed to the angry father that Molly and Bryant, after the ball, had already been married. The father, realizing that he almost just killed his son-in-law, breaks down ashamed and weeps. Molly then, in tears herself, caringly comforts him.

This is a bare and sketchy description of what are some momentous, tense, and moving scenes. All are superb here, particularly George Nichols who gives a heart-wrenching performance, and director Jones' orchestrating the trio, and the drama of a daughter's rebelling against her father in the name of love is not a little reminiscent of the kind of moralistic and poetic "photo-plays" done at Biograph in the early teens.

But wait...the film is *not* yet over. From the reconciliation of father, daughter and son-in-law, we are taken into a mini-serial episode, or perhaps more aptly the updated 1921 version of *Barney Oldfield!* If it is relevant to the main story, it is so in either a very tangential or abstract way. Otherwise it is quite out-of-the-blue, and is best taken as a kind of dessert to the main course. While these scenes with the blimp, and settling the gambling debt of Molly's brother, are not what we would call high-art, they are, nonetheless, exciting and even laugh provoking. Jones here sets on display his talent and flair for thrilling adventure sequences such as he would also later do in movies like *The Gaucho* (1927), with Douglas Fairbanks, and *Bulldog Drummond* (1929), with Ronald Colman. Though all -- including Mabel -- play their parts very nicely, Lowell Sherman, in particular, is a treat as the urbane and calculating scoundrel.

In sum, *Molly O'*, while certainly imperfect, is in its combining of unusual elements an imaginative and original film. We are most blessed and fortunate that it was not completely lost to us as had for many years been thought.

Suzanna

Suzanna is a very odd movie in a number of respects. Unlike any of Mabel's other features, it is a historical costume drama prompted, in its style and settings, by *The Mark of Zorro* and *The Sheik* (the wild horse rides through the desert with wide skyline, for example, with respect to the latter) -- though we would never mistake the hero, Walter McGrail, agreeable as he is, with either Fairbanks or Valentino. But, of course, this is not intended. *Suzanna* is, after all, *Mabel's* picture -- not the leading man's. Also, in doing a film with an early Californian/Mexican theme, it seems not implausible that Sennett was attempting to revive Mabel's memories of those merry days when together they made shorts like *A Spanish Dilemma*⁹⁷ and *The Fickle Spaniard*.

We are at even more of a disadvantage with *Suzanna* than with *Molly O'* in assessing its merits, as the present and only known available version of the film is missing at least two whole reels; and it may well be that these two reels contain some of the film's best sequences, as some of the stills might seem to indicate. As is typical of F. Richard Jones' work, it is at least, mostly, a pleasurable film. Yet because of her off screen troubles, it at times takes on a seriousness not at all implied in the original conception. This will continue to be the case with a number of Mabel's subsequent films. Although as a comedy-melodrama, *Suzanna* doesn't fully succeed at being either -- at least in the conventional sense of these terms. Filmed at the time the Taylor murder and scandal broke, it was presumably made under no little strain; and in viewing it, one senses that there were moments, such as the chaotic bride rescue and

⁹⁷ Also, among some of the footage missing from *Suzanna* is Mabel playing with a bear cub; which gag/plot device harks back to Mabel and Sennett's Biograph shorts *Oh, Those Eyes!* and *The Brave Hunter*.

horseback chases; when Jones himself may have been as distressed during that later stage of production as herself.⁹⁸

On the incidental side, the film suffers from some poor make-up. The wigs and beards of the male actors, particularly George Nichols' eyebrows in close up, are on occasion embarrassingly bad. Similarly, in the horse chase scene at the end of film, Mabel is seen riding on a concealed auto (or trailer to a vehicle) that does not look at all as if she were riding on a horse (as she is supposed to be.) These production defects, while worth mentioning, fortunately occur only in a few spots. Despite this, it is puzzling why things so obvious were not corrected. Another problem with a film, in this case relating to its Spanish setting, is that there are no Latins in any of the main roles. This is all the more strange given the then rising popularity of the likes of Ramon Navarro, Antonio Moreno, and Valentino as leads. On the plus side though, the photography of Homer Scott, whom incidentally William Desmond Taylor himself had first recommended to Mabel, is clear and resolute as one could wish and much better done than in *Molly O'*.

With the exception of *Molly O'*, wild animals, both small and large, feature prominently in all of Mabel's Sennett features. Animals in film early silent films were always popular. Yet a further reason for Sennett's bringing them in is to add a certain earthy realism to the films, necessary, as was deemed, to give balance to the fairy-tale like plots (in *Molly O'* it is the unadorned poverty of the O'Dair's which serves this function). *Suzanna* has more animals in it than any of Mabel's pictures: with cocks, donkeys, bears, bulls, as well as horses. In addition to their simple color and charm, the animals are also used as symbols of the action and characters -- such as cocks fighting and bulls locking horns. This invoking of brutish violence, while not always the most welcome imagery, is exactly the effect Sennett apparently wanted to achieve, again, to atone for the story's too flighty romance.⁹⁹

Mabel in *Suzanna* looks even less well than in her earlier films, yet the assassination of William Desmond Taylor had not taken place until at least half way through shooting! What had caused this further decline in her happiness and vigor, we don't *really* know. The Arbuckle scandal, continuing to live under the pressure of keeping the miscarriage a secret, other physical health problems, naturally are possible considerations. Right after Taylor's death, there followed a two-week break in the shooting of the film in order that Mabel could better absorb and contain the trauma. Given all the enormous pressures she was already under, her success in achieving this was understandably indifferent. Robert E. Sherwood, later a Pulitzer Prize winner, named Mabel's performance in *Suzanna* as one of the best of 1922. Yet he could hardly have awarded this for her performance as Suzanna, so much as he did for her effort to try to put on a good show, indeed make others laugh -- though the world was crashing in on her. As Suzanna the cheerful orphan, Mabel is obviously too unhappy underneath to be very convincing in the role. Yet despite the heavy weights she was bearing, she gives it her best, and remains as ever the stalwart trouper. In place then of Suzanna of the fable, we get instead a more meaningful performance of *real life* courage and forbearance in the face of excruciating duress, and it is this, not so much Mabel's portrayal of the story's fictional character, that Sherwood evidently most admired.

The opening shots are not terribly auspicious. There is a rather vapid comic sequence in which she tries to sneakily grab at a ranch co-worker's lunch (the idea of which, by the way, reminds us of something from Chaplin.) Then follows a cock-fighting scene -- Suzanna's plucky midget bantam takes on a grand rooster and is victorious. It is rather tasteless bit of would-be comedy; though this is no fault of Mabel's. No less silly, yet much, much better is the segment in which Suzanna tells the Indian Black Hawk that she wants to do the "tomahawk dance." Here she dons a great Indian chiefs headdress, and undertakes a war dance, much the

⁹⁸ Similarly, he seemed to lose his director's sense during the making of the final scenes of *Raggedy Rose* -- another time when Mabel was not at all well. It is then conceivable that these lapses stemmed to some extent from Jones' himself being too distraught at Mabel's condition and circumstances, to do his job properly.

⁹⁹ In the finale of *Molly O*, the villain tries to take Molly "aloft" (in a hot air balloon), while the hero brings her back "down to earth" (i.e., they parachute into the sea.)

way a child might -- indeed exactly like a child would do it. She looks like a toddler, palming her mouth repeatedly as she gives the war whoop, stomping back and forth. Meanwhile, Black Hawk, kicks up an actual and authentic Indian dance (as if to show her how it is done); while Minnie Ha Ha (Minnie Devereaux) and another in the background join in. Black Hawk's dance, taken in and of itself, is valuable as a record of native American culture; otherwise the scene is pretty pointless as far as the story goes. Yet Mabel's antics are at least funny and cute in their way, intended, as they no doubt were, for the audience's children.

We come to something with more substance when, in order to keep her away from his son, Francisco, Don Fernando sends Suzanna to a convent, and she will have to traverse on foot a long trek through the grim and arid desert in order to attain her destination. Here real life and story merge nicely, which is Jones' purpose. The harsh journey symbolizes the tribulations in Mabel's real life as film star, including the cruel lambasting and grilling by some of the press with respect to the Taylor case. At the same time sinner and innocent,¹⁰⁰ hers is a hard road of penance as she confronts the inimical and barren waste. Her attitude is one of "don't dwell on the obstacles, put them behind you." This is partly reflected in a little walk she uses. It appeared earlier in *Molly O'*, and would be used again in *The Extra Girl*. What she does is stride with a focused determination. Her arms swing at her side, but otherwise and aside from the legs her body is almost completely rigid. She looks straight ahead as she goes, without once moving her orientation from *forward*. Yet at the same time, she looks not unlike a wind-up doll; which gives the stride its comic quality.

Along her hot, weary path, Suzanna spots a "good luck" horseshoe on the ground that she picks up. After looking skeptically and suspiciously, she flings it away. This is clearly a bit of joke to the audience about Mabel's own troubles (including her numerous reported accidents and illnesses, as well as her connection to the Taylor case.) Finally and reaching towards the end of the long, pitiless trail, Suzanna arrives at a pond-size puddle. Nearby lie the bones of a cow who had not made it so far. Sighing both in wary foreboding of the bones and in view of the relief the large puddle's water offers, she then drinks, and at the same time is refreshed in a kind of baptism (not inappropriate given the Spanish setting.) With the worst of the gauntlet past, onward she goes confident and renewed. It is a humorous as well as moving statement of repentance and courage -- again, rendered more affecting by its commenting on not so easily ignored events in real life.

The last of the surviving of Mabel's scenes in *Suzanna* that can be specifically mentioned here is a cheery Mexican hat dance with Walter McGrail. It is mete to point out, that, except for *The Nickel-Hopper*, there is no other extended dance sequence like this in any of her known feature films. True, the film's having been sped up is partly what makes it funny. However, there's no denying Mabel and McGrail's grace and breathless vigor. In the case of Mabel, a comparison to a capering elf is not inappropriate. Contemporaries sometimes spoke of her as being quite a dancer, and here is proof of it for all to see.

Of what follows thereafter in *Suzanna*, there isn't all that much for her to do, and, she is essentially tossed about by the men as a helpless protagonist, with the inevitable happy marriage to the hero constituting the conclusion.

Yet all in all, *Suzanna*, while winning in moments, is regrettably a disappointing film. The problem is simple. Mabel was suffering from too much personal unhappiness to consistently be the chipper, Mickey-like girl called for by the tale.

Yet if we are willing to construe Mabel's performance as Sherwood did, namely, a real life portrayal of an honest heart under immense strain attempting to shine amid great darkness, it *is* something of a triumph. As inspiration and example, it perhaps gives the film a value well beyond what it might have been as mere conventional entertainment (even had it been successful in that wise.) Instead of Mark Twain, we (inadvertently) get Epictetus. Instead

¹⁰⁰ Suzanna had been a bit mischievous and a source of mayhem on the rancho.

of Mickey, we get Magdalene. Instead of laughter, tears -- yet tears filled with hope as well as sadness.

That things only continued to get worse makes the effort here all the more remarkable and poignant.

The Extra Girl

As has been stated, the murder of director William Desmond Taylor and its aftermath as a matter of course had, as one would suppose, a devastating impact on Mabel, both in her life and work. Although she does not photograph well in *Suzanna*, her dolor and ill health appear perhaps even more pronounced in *The Extra Girl*. Although she could get by to some extent as Molly and Suzanna by being sort of a caricature, by the time of *The Extra Girl* this approach does not nearly work so well. A casual (though not very sensitive or feeling) viewer of the film can rightly complain that she is not only unsuitable for small-town-girl role here, but that worn out as she appears to be at times, she is discomfiting in it. While her eyes do retain much of the liveliness and expression, some shots are done medium rather than close-up in order to avoid too much detail of her face that (as we have seen before) had become somewhat puffy and wan.

The Extra Girl was initially meant as a vehicle for Phyllis Haver, *not* Mabel, which Mabel, albeit in a friendly way, resented. While her reaction was to be expected, given the change that had befallen her, it is not hard to see why Sennett, at this juncture, should have had a difficult time finding suitable parts for her. Presumably what he really sought from her is reflected in David's proposal to Sue Graham:

"Give up this idea of a career and let's get married."

This message occurs on a number of occasions of the film, most especially in the conclusion.

Yet while Mabel leaves something to be desired in the central role, the story is better, and *The Extra Girl* is, overall, a more likable and satisfying movie than *Suzanna*. It moves better, is more amusing, and the coarseness of the previous Sennett features is largely absent. Mabel does generally less well here than in *Suzanna*, yet Jones, this time, compensates and exceeds himself in his virile, optimistic outlook. It's a story about a dreamy, yet spirited small-town-girl, who goes to Hollywood to seek her fame and fortune -- only to be sourly disappointed. As is usual with the Sennett features, Mabel is not wanting in a superb cast. George Nichols (of course) is back as the father figure, as is Anna Hernandez from *Molly O'* in the mother role. Vernon Dent, who would come to be better known in later years by his appearances in many of the Three Stooges' shorts, is humorous as a bumptious lout, not dissimilar to Eddie Gribbon's in *Molly O'*. Ralph Graves, as the boy friend, David, is a propitious embodiment, as well as representative, of the undaunted supporters Mabel had in Richard Jones, and the rest of the production company, cast and crew.

Appropriately, one of the very opening shots of the film has a kitten coming to attack a ball of yarn. Next we see her all tangled up in the string in a ridiculous and hopeless way -- an evident jibe at Mabel's own trying challenges.

On a personal note of my own, *The Extra Girl* was the first Mabel Normand film I ever saw. This was at around nine years of age. I mention this, because it gave me a unique opportunity to view Mabel without any pre-conceptions. What I recall was that she made an immediate, and successful, appeal to my sympathy. I instinctively felt a certain pity for her. I could see, even as young as I was, that she was obviously "not quite right" for the part -- there is too much knowing, and the wisdom of experience in her eyes. She is too tired in her general appearance to be taken as a fresh young girl the story suggests; yet despite all this, there was

something still entrancing, charming and lovely about her, so that the blend of the strange sadness, the age of the film, and my own natural sympathy for her left an indelible impression. This said, I only especially felt this in the early part of the film. As it moved on, my interest went less to Mabel as such and was led more to the main story and action.

Looking back now, those juvenile impressions were essentially correct. Mabel's best, artistically speaking, occurs in *The Extra Girl's* earliest scenes. As Sue Graham, "practicing" her acting for the benefit of her boyfriend and her mother, she performs a dazzling array of impersonations, expressions and faces: seductress, saint, clown (she does a wonderful little gag with her eyes), and damsel in distress. Snippets of these little sequences have been used as comic spots on television programs in our own time, attesting to their agelessness.

Unfortunately, Mabel gleams less resplendently for most of the rest of the film. Among the interesting things attempted, she rides a speeding buck-board pulled by racing horses and whipped on by her boyfriend (in order to escape her father and Applejohn.) Here she has only to sit in the wagon while the boyfriend drives the team. Following this is a shot where she runs, and, with help of her beau, climbs up aboard the caboose of a moving train. It is not as fluid and spontaneous as the athletic antics of "Keystone Mabel." Yet she gives it her best, so that the effort is both moving in its way and admirable.

Throughout much the film we catch a number of the later Mabel's peculiar mannerisms. These are not so easy to recount, and are, understandably, necessary to be seen to be appreciated. We can, though, mention a couple at least to suggest *some* idea of them. In one instance, she talks character A about character B, with all three present in the same room. With one hand covering the side of her face -- thus facetiously "concealing" her from B (and also at the same time perhaps winking) -- she speaks to A about B as if B isn't present. Another has her with wide smile on her face, her eyes all but closed: similar to the kind of smiley face we normally associate with Stan Laurel.

At the studio, Sue Graham, as prop-room lackey, manifests a certain insubordination - - kicking hats and goofing off. This "devil-may-care" attitude the passing years had not significantly diminished, and is one characteristic of hers that she retains with some zest and tenacity.

At one point, Sue has a screen test done before an old-fashioned, circa 1910, garden scene. Again, one gets the impression Sennett wanted to want to bring back the "good old days." It is a nostalgic and unforgettable scene, even if the main gag used isn't especially brilliant. Cast in the role of the "Actor" (playing opposite Mabel) is William Desmond, a veteran lead who had been prominent in the teens. It is odd that given the similarity of his name to William Desmond Taylor's (whose original name was actually William Deane Tanner) he should be in the film. One would think it might be making too light of something very serious. Indeed, is Sennett perhaps mocking Taylor by pointing out his false identity? Though we don't have answers ready to us, certainly the casting of Desmond is very odd, and is not likely a mere coincidence. The motive behind it then is not entirely apparent. But be it what it was, it would be safe to guess that while Mabel tolerated the jest she probably did not care for it.¹⁰¹

The Extra Girl's most famous sequence is that where she walks a real lion around the studio set thinking it is only Teddy in costume. This is followed by Sue and the studio people's discovery and response to her error. It is Jones' action minded direction and editing that makes the scene work so successfully. Perhaps it was thought a little "shock" therapy would help Mabel, and who is really only incidental to what transpires. She seems to be giving it her best, but the fact is, she simply does not look at all well. Once more, she comes across as too

¹⁰¹ In a much later scene Sue surreptitiously climbs through villain Hackett's window with a gun in her hand. This conceivably was included to show how silly and ridiculous it would be to think of Mabel as a gun-woman. Ironically -- and no doubt bitterly so -- this effect was largely ruined by the Dines' incident; which gave the sequence a confused (if not opposite) meaning.

unhappy to be properly funny. Even when she is smiling, there are times when she looks as though she has a hard time keeping from crying.

Why then *didn't* Mabel just retire, get married, and have children? This is what the ending scene of *The Extra Girl* seems to ask and suggest. At first, we might think this might be seen as male patronization, but in Mabel's case it perhaps made good sense. For most of the picture, and for that matter her last few pictures, her get-up-and-go seemed to have given out. Although Mabel *always* did have her moments, her health does not seem up to the demanding requirements of ongoing performance. One could speculate at length on her reasons for not settling down and retiring from films. No doubt one reason was a desire to not seem to be chased from her career by people unfairly berating and haunting her with scandal. Another, understandably, is that she didn't want to so easily relinquish what had otherwise and hitherto brought her so much fame and felicity. Unfortunately, times had changed, Mabel had changed, and things were far from what they once had been.

"This lion is the whole show, far more amusing than Miss Normand."¹⁰²

The reviewer here is not really being so harsh as he is being truthful. More significantly, though perhaps not consciously, he hits on something more than he seems to say. The lion in this case is not Duke the lion so much as director Dick Jones and cast. They are all pulling for her, giving their all. Considering what she was up against, they are in truth veritable "lions" in their effort.

Yet because we are dealing with comedy, they are also "clowns." One is much reminded of the ballet sequence in *Limelight*. In a way Mabel is like the dying girl who the poor clowns are trying to cheer up and revive. These, however, are no ordinary clowns, but heroic and clever ones as well; and in the case of *The Extra Girl*, this is no fairy tale, but real life. Though her case looks to be hopeless, she *tries*, without much success, to pretend it isn't. The clowns, even so, are too loyal to her to give up hope; and so they go all out, as best they can, for her. The courage and heart of both Mabel and her encouraging consolers is what ultimately makes *The Extra Girl* a superior, albeit flawed, film. Again, as in the case of *Suzanna*, its accomplishment lies not in the optimal realization of the original idea and characters of the story. In that department it largely fails. Rather, as with *Suzanna*, it is in its unintended portrayal of some brave people in real life -- not fiction -- struggling against crushing and insurmountable circumstances that is found *The Extra Girl's* most conspicuous worth.

Mabel never lacked for a good crew in Jones and the given Sennett cast, and in what would turn out to be their last and final go together, the latter acquit themselves most capably.

The Hal Roach films

One of the repeated aspects of Mabel's later films is that she is almost always playing a little girl character. This was not always the most ingenious use of her, yet was dictated by the wants of her audience and producers. Did this kind of type-casting go against her own wishes? It is not easy to say, but the simple answer would seem to be no. While she had told William Desmond Taylor she regretted not being able to make films like *The Little Minister* or *The Morals of Marcus* (Taylor's version was called *Morals*), she does not seem outwardly to have been unhappy about her own screen roles. While Gene Fowler, in *Father Goose*, does present her as telling Sennett she was weary of Cinderella,¹⁰³ she was probably more traditional

¹⁰² *New York Times*, Jan. 21, 1924

¹⁰³ "'I've got a dandy picture, Mabel. Nobody but you can play it.'

'Cinderella once again, eh? What would happen, Mike, if you made Cinderella tough girl?'

'There's nothing wrong with Cinderella,' said Sennett.

'She and Camille are the best plots there are.'

'You're telling me!' said Mabel. 'The best plots? They're the only plots Hollywood ever had. In fact, Cinderella and the Camille kid crossed the plains in Forty-nine. They're pioneers. How's your health, Mike?'

'It's fine. Now stop kidding and come back to work.'

in her tastes then we might off hand suspect or surmise. That she was as sentimental and old-fashioned minded as Sennett, however, would, on the other hand, be an overstatement.

Depending on how one looks at them, Mabel's Roach films are either too little too late, or else fitting farewells of an unpretentious genius and a great heart, and on reflection the latter seems the more correct interpretation of the two.

In doing short films for Hal Roach in 1926 and 1927, Mabel was decidedly taking a step down from her former station. Where as before she was always the main star, now she was one among dozens of the Hal Roach "All-Stars." Possibly she wanted to be sporting by offering some humility on her part, even to the extent of starring in a short with the not so flattering title *Raggedy Rose*. In *The Nickel-Hopper* her character, a working -- and dancing -- girl, says to the un-introduced beau: "I don't live on Park St. I live on Lark St." In other words, she parts with any claim to affected title and when it gets right down to it, she's not really so different than the rest of us.

The two and three reel shorts Mabel made for Hal Roach are actually very good taken as the light, upbeat comedy fare. They are not by any stretch masterpieces; yet they are entertaining enough, and suggest what Mabel might have done outside Sennett. In light of her previous real life ordeals, there is an understandable effort in these shorts to create some sympathy for her. She is still mostly playing Cinderella; yet, except for portions of *Raggedy Rose*, she seems more confident, and her general look has improved since either *Suzanna* or *The Extra Girl*. It is intriguing for us to see, as it no doubt was then, to see where Mabel has come to in the wake of the previous scandals and health problems. Under the circumstances, she seems to have weathered them encouragingly well -- though by no means completely. In *Nickel-Hopper* she breaks down weeping in such a way that, again, is quite inappropriate to the circumstance; such that we are painfully brought to mind of the prodigious difficulties and sadness still burdening her.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, she looks not a little disoriented in some of *Raggedy Rose*. Anita Garvin, who appeared therein with Mabel, in an interview relates that during shooting Mabel had trouble finding her spot in front of the camera. And, indeed, Mabel on screen occasionally seems not a little befuddled or distracted. Other than these particular exceptions, Mabel comes off rather well in the Roach comedies -- again, as always, given the trying circumstances.

Raggedy Rose,¹⁰⁵ the first of the Roach films, was directed by Richard Wallace in collaboration with Stan Laurel,¹⁰⁶ and is much less of a film than it might have been. Though it reuses some of the gags of *What Happened to Rosa*, the premise for her character is interesting. Rose is the one "who gets everything second hand -- even the sunshine." Mabel and Max Davidson (who appeared in *The Extra Girl*) make for a credible comedy team, and it's to be regretted their pairing was not further pursued. In spite of this, external stresses, such as the revival of the Taylor case by District Attorney Asa Keyes, brought a tension and stress to the making of the film that were apparently too much for her. This in turn must have affected Wallace and Laurel; so that much of *Raggedy Rose*, particularly the latter part, is done in a rather careless and sloppy manner. It is in this short, incidentally, that the gag of an auto completely falling apart on slightest impact -- the same one used later in the Roach Laurel and Hardy comedies -- saw one of its earliest debuts.

In *The Nickel-Hopper* -- for the first time -- she is placed in a setting that makes reference to the 20's Jazz Age. While Clara Bow was able to take full advantage of this, Mabel was prevented previously from doing so largely because it clashed too much with the image of

'Thumbs down. I won't do any more shorts. I'm tired of being Cinderella. In fact, I'm tired of being Mabel Normand...'" -- *Father Goose* p. 323.

¹⁰⁴ A similar occurrence takes place in *The Extra Girl*.

¹⁰⁵ A fair amount of promotion and publicity came out accompanying this film, including a photo-comic strip of *Raggedy Rose* that appeared, among other publications, in the *New York Evening Graphic*, November 8-13, 1926. As well as some specially composed sheet music brought out with the film.

¹⁰⁶ Stan Laurel later credited Dick Jones with being the one who taught him how to make films. James Finlayson, a Laurel and Hardy regular, incidentally, is among the film's cast.

her prior films. Moreover, it might have been thought, among several reasons that could be educed, unnecessarily provocative, given the Taylor and Dines scandals, for Mabel to be cast in the role of frivolous flapper -- "silly girl" or "sweetheart" being much safer characters public relations-wise. Here she is still a not well-to-do working girl, yet, this time, one at a dance hall kicking up her heels to live Jazz music. More in temper of the era also, the father, rather than being the respectable, if silly figure, of previous films is here an outright, good-for-nothing buffoon -- competently enough acted by Michael Visaroff.¹⁰⁷ Aside from this, there are diverting, albeit brief, appearances by Oliver Hardy and the then not-so-famous William Henry Pratt, known later as Boris Karloff. There isn't much improvement on the old gags; some of those in *Raggedy Rose* being decidedly better. Yet it proceeds more smoothly and evenly than the latter, and aside from a scene where she breaks down crying (rather inexplicably so), she looks relatively more refreshed and up to form. The film ends with an amusing and surrealistic sequence. After she and the groom accidentally trip off a cliff, her wedding dress opens up into a parachute, and by this means the two newlyweds magically descend.

Anything Once! (and also *Should Men Walk Home?*) is noteworthy because it is such airy fluff and, other than a little paleness and a slight rigidity in Mabel's movements, there seems hardly a sign of problems, unlike the previous Roach films. There are likeable moments, such as Mabel at the ironing board. But the comedy is not otherwise remarkable. Later in the film, she is dressed in an 18th century tall wig, and ballroom gown similar to the one in *Molly O'*. Although a two reel short, it is, like *Molly O'*, a Cinderella story, but a Cinderella story which ends on the note that our diminutive heroine "must be wooed to be won."

One Hour Married, while it is rumored to exist, has not yet (to my knowledge) been found. A comedy set amid the trenches of World War One, it appears to have been a clever and unusual film for her; with Mabel at one point sporting a mustache -- a witty touch reminiscent of the old Biograph short *Katchem Kate*.

Her last outing, *Should Men Walk Home?* is very unusual among all of her films. One has to go as far back as *Tillie's Punctured Romance* to find Mabel playing the "bad girl." Here she is a gun robber holding up vehicles, and later a jewel thief! Needless to say, it is quite out of character from what we saw her doing earlier, and, though only in fun, is still a daring move away from Sue Graham and *Raggedy Rose*. Directed by Leo McCarey, the plot of this short centers on two crooks (played respectively by Normand and Creighton Hale) attending a party at a fancy mansion, and who seek by stealth to make off with a purloined jewel. Meanwhile a suspicious house detective, portrayed by Eugene Pallette, follows them about attempting to catch them with the goods. Hale is a both appealing and funny lead, and Mabel carries herself well. Certainly, it is very curious to see her doing something so very different. Despite this, and aside from its value in this way, there is no great merit to this comedy, other than to suggest what other kinds of roles she might else have expanded into. *Should Men Walk Home?* is like a test film; the ideas and possibilities of which regrettably were never to be realized. We can say that her performance shows some new promise, but that's about it. A firm conclusion is impossible. And thus it could be said, like the film's title itself, that Mabel's career itself ends on a question mark.

The woes of life over time and ultimately crashed in with ruinous fury upon her, and there is simply no getting around the fact. These troubles interfered tremendously with and strained the quality of her work; such that after the triumph of her Biograph and Keystone Days -- with the notable exception of *Mickey* -- one can't help but feel a little disappointed with the later films by comparison. The last are good enough in and of themselves -- after all Mabel just about never bores -- yet for the most part they fall noticeably short of the energy and youthful fervor of the Biograph, Keystone films, and *Mickey*.

¹⁰⁷ Visaroff is much funnier, however, as W.C. Fields' homicidal cellmate in *The Man on the Flying Trapeze* (1935). He also, incidentally, appears as the innkeeper in Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931).

But this is true only if we narrowly insist on treating those later films as comedy and fun entertainment. If, however, we step back and view the star of these films as an exuberant heart fatally disappointed, passing through the relentless tumult of real life, we get an affecting portrait of endurance holding out against egregious and aggravated suffering. Though blow follows upon tragic blow, she stills looks forward, while doing her best to laugh and make others happy. She does not always succeed; yet this only reminds us of the devastating obstacles and insurmountable ills she was faced with. In retrospect then, hers is a beautiful, yet sad, drama that teaches a deeper wisdom about life that few at the time, even those involved in making these films, could hardly have been aware. The mystery and intrigue accompanying it all only adds to its fascination for us today.

In addition to the semi-real life portrait of Mabel in these later films, we also are provided with indirect glimpses of those who steadfastly stood up for her: Richard Jones and many others -- under no little pressure themselves -- who took part in their making and production. Their wit, courage and effort in support of her, remain an inspiration and model to those who aspire to something more noble and worthy in this life.

1910-1912

* from *Moving Picture World*, June 25, 1910

Over The Garden Wall (Vitagraph) -- A pretty story which is perhaps best described by saying that quite in a natural way a widow and widower¹⁰⁸ meet and marry through their children, becoming acquainted over the garden wall. The story is not great perhaps but it is pleasant and the ending is sweet as the most ardent admirer of love stories could desire.

* from *The Nickelodeon*,¹⁰⁹ March 11, 1911

Betty Becomes a Maid (Vitagraph) -- Margaret is the older and Betty the younger of two sisters; naturally Margaret claims precedence. Their brother Jack writes home from college stating that he will bring a young unmarried millionaire friend to spend a few days with them. Margaret immediately gets in line to set her cap for the young visitor and warns Betty not to be too presumptuous, for Margaret is well aware that Betty has the advantage in looks and winsomeness. In order to give her sister every chance. Betty says she will play waitress. Brother Jack and his friend join the family at dinner, Margaret pays considerable attention to Jack's friend, but he is attracted by Betty, who is now acting as serving maid. He is so smitten by the pretty maid, that he can see nothing else and Margaret becomes greatly incensed. The young millionaire makes up his mind to get acquainted with the waitress and Jack agrees to help him, not letting him know that she is his own sister. Betty of whom the young fellow has heard a great deal. He follows Betty into the kitchen, bribes the cook to let him sit there until he meets the pretty girls. When she comes in he makes love to her, and in the excitement both he and Betty get covered with flour and sit in the dough, which the cook has been mixing. To add to the fun of it all, Betty tries to protect her face with the dough, from the kisses which the young fellow is trying to give her, she is a sight to behold, but nothing daunted, he makes a hole in the dough and succeeds in planting two or three kisses on her pretty mouth. Betty's father comes into the kitchen with Margaret, the young millionaire tells them he is in love with the waitress; explanations follow, Betty's identity is made known. The young fellow proposes to her there and then, the father's consent is gained and Margaret joins in with all the rest in offering congratulations to little sister and intended. Released March 14.

* from *New York Dramatic Mirror*, May 3, 1911

Picciola (Vitagraph) -- The delicate and poetical sentiment of this film is splendid. A little flowering plant forcing its way upward through a crevice of the stone paving in a cheerless prison yard furnished the incident on which is based as pretty a love romance as has been seen in a long time. A political prisoner during the First French Empire finds in the plant solace and relief. He cares for it and it rewards him by saving his life from fever and winning for him the love of a pure young girl, who comes to the prison to see her father, also a victim of politics. To complete its magic charm it wins freedom for both men, softens the heart of the jailor and wrings a response from the cold calculation of the great Emperor [Napoleon] himself. The fever is conquered when the jailor brews the tea from the leaves and gives it to the sick man. The rest is accomplished when the visiting girl petitions the Emperor to permit the removal of a paving stone that the plant may not be choked to death. He comes to investigate and speedy pardon follows. All parts are played with great skill and expression. Released April 20.

[In response to R.S.F., New York:] The Vitagraph Betty is Mabel Normand.¹¹⁰

* from *Moving Picture World*, May 6, 1911

Troublesome Secretaries (Vitagraph) -- This film pictures the difficulties of an old man who has a pretty daughter with whom his secretaries become very much infatuated. After trying numerous expedients with one of them he discovers that the young people are too sharp for him and he gives his consent to the wedding which is supposed to end all his troubles.

* from *New York Dramatic Mirror*, May 10, 1911

[In response to J. Platt Foster, Jersey City:] Betty in the Vitagraph films is Mabel Normand. Quite agree with you that she is well worth looking at, and that Vitagraph films are always welcome.

* from *New York Dramatic Mirror*, May 17, 1911

[Portrait photograph, the caption of which reads]: Mabel Normand The popular "Betty" of the Vitagraph Stock

* from *New York Dramatic Mirror*, May 24, 1911

Thomas Martin, New York, city: Picciola in the Vitagraph film of that name was played by Mabel Normand.

¹⁰⁸ Maurice Costello.

¹⁰⁹ The *Nickelodeon* later changed its name to *Motography*.

¹¹⁰ This and subsequent items which give someone's name or initials, their location, followed by a brief word or remark are answers from the magazine's film editor in reply to that person. Although we aren't always told what the letter writer asked, often times their question can be inferred from the answer the editor gives them. This approach and format is commonly found in other early film magazines as well, such as *Motion Picture Magazine*.

* from *Moving Picture World*, May 27, 1911

When a Man's Married¹¹¹ [sic] (Vitagraph) -- This comedy is based upon the experience of a married man who by mistake exchanges cameras with a reporter friend. The married man, Jack Howard, is played by James Morrison; Mabel, Jack's wife, by Mabel Nelson¹¹², and the reporter by Edward Phillips. The playlet is made the more attractive by the few characters included. When Jack's pictures come home his wife sees pictures of women in interesting poses; they are the press pictures of a theatrical attraction. If the reporter hadn't shown up, there would have been a separation. The parts are well played and the film is sufficiently amusing to keep the audience in good humor.

* from *New York Dramatic Mirror*, May 31, 1911

A Dead Man's Honor (Vitagraph,) A strong drama somewhat reminiscent of a recent Lubin release. It is played, however, with much strength and characterization, bringing out the sentiment of the story through well defined and logical action, and leading up to a gripping climax. Hugh, the mother's darling, is in love with Helen, his brother Henry's sweetheart. Rejected by her he leaves a note in his sleeping mother's lap to the effect that he is going West, where he will earn enough money to pay off the mortgage. His mother begins to grow old and is losing her sight. She grieves so for her that Henry starts out to find him. The stage coach on which he travels is held up and Henry wounds the departing highwayman. He then pursues him, only to find it is his brother Hugh, who has fallen prostrate in the woods. In returning to the village for whiskey he discovers there is a reward for Hugh dead or alive. He takes the placard back with him, writes a note upon it to Hugh, telling to return to his mother and to claim the reward for the capture of the highwayman, as he, Henry, will take his place. When Hugh reads this he staggers to the sheriff's office and gives himself up. Henry returns with the reward and assumes to be Hugh, that his mother may die content. Maurice Costello assumes the part of Hugh. Release May 23.

* from *New York Dramatic Mirror*, July 12, 1911

[A half page *Vitagraph Bulletin*, with photo of *Flora Finch*, *John Bunny*, and *Mabel Normand* in the *Subduing of Mrs. Nag*.]

"A hot proposition is Mrs. Nag, but she is thoroughly subdued and everybody is smiling and happy throughout."

* from *New York Dramatic Mirror*, July 19, 1911

The Subduing of Mrs. Nag (Vitagraph) -- A decidedly humorous picture is given delightfully clever treatment herein and is typically played, gaining many well deserved laughs. Mrs. Nag¹¹³ is particular that her husband should not have a pretty stenographer. Accordingly, when the new applicant arrives she appears at the office to investigate. She tells Mr. Nag that the girl must go, as she is far too pretty, but Miss Prue proves herself to be a lady of some resource [sic]. She disguises herself as a prim young person, but that also proves unsatisfactory. Then she becomes a man in her brothers clothes and the silent admirer of Mrs. Nag. Mr. Nag catches his wife wearing the flowers of the silent admirer and thus having something on his wife, discharges his man and rehires her as a woman and Mrs. Nag must hold her peace. Released July 14.

* from *Moving Picture World*, July 29, 1911

The Subduing of Mrs. Nag (Vitagraph) -- This comic character picture gives the two leading character players "Bunny" and Miss Finch, of the Vitagraph Company, a splendid chance to show how much can be pictured, almost told, by facial expression, and the amount of characterization that they accomplish is remarkable. But between little Miss Prue, the stenographer to whom Mrs. Nag objects and the prim Miss Prue of next day, the supposedly new stenographer, there is such an amusing difference that it alone is worth seeing. These character plays of the Vitagraph company are all good. This is better than the average; but they are not to be compared with the real comedies that this company produces every now and then.

* from *New York Dramatic Mirror*, August 16, 1911

Mary E. Conon, of Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, simply adores Mabel Normand (Betty), of the Vitagraph players. She goes on to say:

I saw *The Subduing of Mrs. Nag*, and really she was great and played the part of a young dandy so good we were only wishing she were really a boy. Please publish a photograph of her in *The Mirror*. How old is she? About eighteen I should guess. How long has she been with Vitagraph? Is it true she is going to be married? Please tell me where to write her. I am very fond of Mary Pickford, Florence Lawrence. I like Mary Fuller. I shall appreciate very much, dear Mr. Spectator, if you will answer my questions.

When the ladies come at one like this, what is one to do? "DEAR Mr. Spectator!" "How old is she?" "Is she going to be married?" and so on. Well, the guess of eighteen years is as safe as any and will probably stand good for twenty years to come. As for marriage, the question is a private matter that *The Mirror* doesn't bother with. Miss Normand's portrait appeared in this paper May 17.

[In response to M. Brinig, Butte, Mont.:] Miss Normand is still with the Vitagraph.

* from *Sheboygan Press*, September 29, 1911

UNIQUE [theater]

Daylight Pictures

A New York Cowboy -- A Selig Western comedy drama...

¹¹¹ The full title of the film is *When a Man's Married His Troubles Begin*.

¹¹² "Mabel Nelson," i.e., Mabel Normand. Another review of the time has her as "Hazel Neilson."

¹¹³ Flora Finch.

\$500.00 reward – A Biograph comedy...

The Diving Girl – A Biograph comedy woven around a girl who is as much at home in the water as a fish, and who makes things lively for her father, until he – in despair locks her up, far, far away from the maddening waves; but even then she gets out, and he is forced to take her home, where there is nothing like water on the place.

The Construction and Flight of An Aeroplane – Will again be shown this evening...

Emil Bill will sing "My Heart's Tonight in Tennessee," and L.P. Williams will sing "for Killarney and You" a beautiful Irish ballad with some slides.

* from *Biograph Bulletins*¹¹⁴

The Diving Girl

With her uncle¹¹⁵ she visits the seashore and goes bathing with a party of her brother's friends. Uncle also takes a dip and is annoyed at the perilous performance of the girl. He orders her from the water and locks her in her room, but brother releases her. He finally concludes that home is the best place for her for there she will run no chance of drowning. Released Aug. 21, 1911

The Baron

Two Waiters, vain of their personal appearance, have their photographs taken by an itinerant photographer. The boss catches them and "Fired!" is the result. One of them hits upon a scheme to get easy money by posing as a baron. Things are coming his way, when he is met by his erstwhile friend who gives the snap away. However, he would have succeeded in marrying an heiress, but for a mix-up at the license bureau, giving him a dog's license instead of a marriage license. Rel. Aug. 31, 1911

The Squaw's Love

An Indian Poem of Love in Pictures

White Eagle¹¹⁶ is betrothed to Silver Fawn¹¹⁷ before leaving for a hunting trip. Gray Fox, his friend, loves Wild Flower, the chief's daughter, but when he asks her father's sanction, he is exiled for his presumption, the chief ordering him to be taken off to the wilds and deprived of his firearms. Starvation would have been his fate, had not White Eagle happened along. To aid his friend, White Eagle promises to bring Wild Flower to him, and when Silver Fawn sees White Eagle stealthily leave the camp with Wild Flower, she imagines her lover false. She follows, and creeping up behind, hurls Wild Flower over into the stream, from which perilous plight she is rescued by Gray Fox, who is escaping in a canoe from a gang of drunken Indians who have seized him. The chief, however, has ordered death to the fugitives, and after the meeting of the four and an explanation given, they make good their escape only after Wild Flower has swum under the canoes of their pursuers and ripped them with a knife, causing them to sink. Rel. Sept. 14, 1911

Her Awakening

The Punishment of Pride

A pretty but dutiful daughter has one fault, vanity. She is ashamed of her poor old mother, who is decrepit and lame. Working in the office of a laundry, she meets on social terms one of the customers, who, becoming quite attracted by her, is later considered her sweetheart. Ashamed of her home and mother, she has never let him visit her, preferring to meet him outside at a trysting place. One day when walking with her sweetheart, she meets her mother, but denies her. Her awakening comes a few minutes later when she sees her poor old mother knocked down by an automobile. Her mother dies from the effects of the accident, and the poor girl's grief knows no bounds as she fondles the old cane so long carried by her dear mother. Her future does not remain hopeless, for the young man vows he still loves her; but what a bitter punishment she had suffered for vanity. Rel. Sept. 28, 1911

The Unveiling

Saving a Young Man from Moral, Social and Maybe Financial Ruin

The boy, who is the idol of his widowed mother returns from college with a collegiate record she is justly proud of. To mark the occasion his boyhood sweetheart and her mother come to spend a few days. The too-indulgent mother, however, is blind to the fact that the boy is spending most of his evenings in full dress, which should have told her that Bohemian society was engaging his attention. A show girl, who learns that he will soon come into great wealth, determines him to win. Unsophisticated as he is, he is an easy prey. A friend of the family warns the mother of her boy's danger, which she is loath to believe until positive proof is presented. Pleadings are in vain for the boy is fascinated, and so the sorrowing mother, feeling she has lost all that she has lived for, determines upon self-destruction and is prevented only by the timely appearance of her visiting friend, who devises the plan that awakens the boy. She has the mother pretend suicide on account of the loss of fortune. This shows the boy the true nature and design of the object of his infatuation. Rel. Oct. 16, 1911

¹¹⁴ The time during which Mabel worked for Biograph is understandably lacking in articles and reviews mentioning her due in part to Biograph's policy, at that time, of not allowing the names of its stars to be known to the public. There must have been some negative reaction to this; which is no doubt why Biograph came up with the feeble, and in some ways risible, compromise of designating its players by fictitious names in their overseas releases. *The Diving Girl*, incidentally, is the very first film in which Sennett directed Mabel. This and subsequent Biograph Bulletins were characteristically used as newspaper advertisements and inserts in locations where the films were showing – film reviews in ordinary newspapers having not quite yet come into their own.

¹¹⁵ Fred Mace.

¹¹⁶ Dark Cloud.

¹¹⁷ Dorothy West.

Through His Wife's Picture

Mr. Nelson is a "newlywed" and carries his darling wife's picture with him always. However, he almost falls for the temptation to go to the mask-ball, inviting an erstwhile lady friend to go with him, telling her that he would dress as a pirate and she to go as a Spanish gypsy. At the sight of his wife's portrait, however, he realizes his intended wrong-doing and changes his mind, asking a friend to go in his stead. The office boy mixes the letters and wifey gets the one he intended for the girl, and she goes to catch her erring hubby. So while hubby waits at home, wifey is keeping her eye on the bold, bad pirate she believes to be her husband. Rel. Oct. 23, 1911

Why He Gave Up

Hubby is anxious to get away for a little time at the beach with the boys, and works up a quarrel with wifey over a new hat, the bill for which he is asked to pay. Making this excuse, he goes off with his chums. The wife is an expert swimmer and diver and is invited to attend a meet of the ladies' swimming club of which she was formerly a member. Her husband's treatment induces her to accept the invitation. The affair takes place at the very beach to which the husband hied himself. One may imagine that hubby has not only plunged into the cooling waters of the surf, but into domestic hot water as well. Rel. Dec. 4, 1911

Saved From Himself

His Sweetheart's Influence Stays Him from Dishonor

The young hotel clerk and the stenographer are engaged and the boy's one ambition is to provide a rosy future for his bride. With this in mind, he invests all his savings in the stock market, having been induced so to do by the success of an old friend in the market. He, however, is not so fortunate, for the stocks he bought are dropping fast. His broker wires for \$2,000 to save him from utter ruin. This, of course, he hasn't, and in the despair caused by the thought of his hopes for the future being crushed, he is about to yield to the temptation of appropriating a large amount of money left in care of the hotel proprietor by one of the guests, when his purpose is discovered by his sweetheart whose influence saves him from the dishonorable act his desperation would have driven him to. Rel. Dec. 11, 1911

The Eternal Mother

Sacrifice of the Woman's Higher Love

This is rather a symbolism than a picture of the material. The young couple are betrothed and later are married, and so the days pass by, they happy and contented on their little farm, each helping with the other's burdens, until a restless, thoughtless woman appears and meets the man. He is possessed of an irresistible fascination for her, and so the grief-stricken wife¹¹⁸, whose love for her husband is of the unselfish kind, feeling he would be happier with the attractive woman, makes the sacrifice of freeing him. He is divorced and married to the other woman, and later begins to pay the penalty. His second wife is ill, and he is alone in his distress when his first wife, in whom is strong the spirit of the eternal mother, comes to him in his hour of need, caring for the wife and taking the infant after her death. It is now that the man awakens to the realization of his unworthiness, and as the years pass he works out his redemption. Rel. Jan. 11, 1912

The Mender of Nets

In the Tangled Mesh of Life's Nets

The little mender¹¹⁹ is betrothed to Tom, the fisherman, rejecting the suits of all the others. Tom, however, is weak, and finds that his old infatuation for Grace still haunts him. Grace has sacrificed all for her love for Tom, and when she sees him courting the little mender, she reminds him of his duty toward her. He realizes the strength of this and hints to the little mender that he is not worthy of her. Grace's brother learns of her dishonor and attempts vengeance. A quarrel ensues between the men, and the little mender, ignorant of the cause, attempts to save her sweetheart from the anger of the brother, and her tender appeal turns him for the time from his purpose. The little mender learns, however, the cause and the truth of the other girl's sorrow, and, smothering her own feelings awakens Tom to his sense of duty, while she returns to mend the nets, solaced by her memories and her old father. Rel. Feb. 15, 1912

The Fatal Chocolate

Upon the arrival of the young girl from the city, Zeke and Jake, brothers, each determine to win her. For a time these rival brothers are amusing to her, but when her real sweetheart appears, she is at a loss to know how to get rid of them. Her city beau, however, wants to have some fun with them, so is introduced to the rubes as her brother. He pretends to be interested in the condition of affairs, and decides they must prove their love by chancing fate for her sake. He places three chocolates on the table, stating that one of the candies contains deadly poison. To the amazement of all they take a chance -- but for naught. Rel. Feb. 19, 1912

A Spanish Dilemma

Jose and Carlos, brothers, are smitten with the same Senorita, and she cares for the one as much as she does the other, then comes the great difficulty of choosing, for brotherly love is so strongly imbued that each is loath to do anything to vanquish the other. In fact, they are what might be called the "Non militant rivals." Their endeavors to induce the girl to decide between them are most unique, and each time they find themselves even. At last they draw cards, only to find, when this plan has been successful, the young lady lost them both by being betrothed to another. Rel. March 11, 1912

The Engagement Ring

¹¹⁸ Blanche Sweet.

¹¹⁹ Mary Pickford.

Harry is successful in winning Alice, despite the efforts of Redmond to dethrone him in her esteem. Redmond swears vengeance, and declares his determination to win the proud beauty. Harry, being rather impecunious, is forced to buy the engagement ring on the "\$5.00 down, \$1.00 per week" plan. Redmond sees his chance here to get the better of Harry and would have succeeded had not an auto accident proven a "mudfall" for Harry to clear his debts with the money he receives for damages. Rel. March 11, 1912

* from *Oakland Tribune*, March 15, 1912

[advertisement]

OAKLAND – Largest Photo Theater in America – Open at 12 p.m. Daily.

Broadway at 15th Street *Opposite Big Flagpole*

Entire Change of Program Sunday and Wednesday.

This Friday and Saturday.

Kalem....."A Spartan Mother"

Vita (Funny Bunny)....."First Woman Jury in America"

Biograph....."A Spanish Dilemma"

C.G.P.C....."The Rell Brothers"

Biograph....."The Engagement Ring"

C.G.P.C....."The Poison Cap"

Selig....."Boulder"

Tomorrow-Saturday Morning 10 to 12—Children's Educational Matinee. Special Pictures—Special Music

* from *Daily Democrat* [Greenville, Mississippi], March 18, 1912

"The Eternal Mother" (Biograph) – This is rather a symbolism [sic] than a picture of the material. The picture is played by three of the best lading players of the Biograph company. A young couple pass their days happy and contented on their little farm, until a restless, thoughtless woman appears and meets the man. The man is fascinated by the strange woman, and there follows a tale of sacrifice on the part of the loving, unselfish wife. This story is most dramatic and interesting.

* from *Evening Standard* [Ogden, Utah], March 25, 1912

[advertisement]

...**ORACLE** [theater]

Her Face (Edison)

A Charming Light Comedy—A Tale of a Poem of Love and a Mischievous Breeze.

The Wrong Bride (Pathe)

A Mexican Love Story, Taken in Mexico and very Interesting.

A Voice From the Deep (Biograph)

One of the Funniest Kind.

Hot Stuff (Biograph)

A Funny One Full of Tabasco Sauce.

The Old Silver Watch (Vitagraph)

A[n] Heirloom That Serves to Establish a Brother's and Sister's relationship...

All Licensed Film—The Film of Quality--The Brightest and Clearest—The Steadiest To Be Seen Anywhere—Every
Detail Brought Out in Full—The Best and Latest Always
10 Cents—10 Cents—10 Cents

* from *Motion Picture Story Magazine*, April 1912

Popular Player Contest

Up to 12 M[idnight]. February 29, 1912, the leaders in the contest stood as follows:

Maurice Costello (Vitagraph).....38,748

E. Dolores Cassinelli (Essanay).....37,723

Mae Hotely (Lubin).....26,059

G. M. Anderson (Essanay).....23,805

Florence Lawrence.....15,428

Arthur Johnson (Lubin).....9,522

Mary Fuller (Edison).....7,381

Mary Pickford.....6,316

(listed 30th in list of 52)

Mabel Normand.....1,144

(others listed:)

Henry Walthall.....746

Owen Moore (Thanhouser).....636

* from *Sheboygan Press*, May 29, 1912

[advertisement]

The Pastime Theatre

Faust – The great Pathe special film in two reels. Better, bigger, brighter than “Il Trovatore.” The most beautiful colored film ever produced. A marvel of beauty, a symphony of motion, a wonder of photography. Don’t miss this wonderful portrayal of the famous opera known the world over with incidental music specially arranged to suit this film, scene for scene.

The Fatal Chocolate – A roaring Biograph comedy. Waves of laughter engulfs the audience in seeing this funny photoplay. You will certainly pronounce it a decided novelty.

Got a Match? – This farce might almost be called a travesty on certain scenes and situations one is apt to see upon the screen, for it begins with the irate father who refuses to permit his daughter to marry, and he locks her in her room and stands guard with revolver in hand. We won’t say more, come and see it for yourself.

Mr. O. Taft will sing: “Schlaf Wohl, du Suesser Engel du.”

Admission 10c, children 5c.

* from *Biograph Bulletins*

Oh, Those Eyes

Gladys¹²⁰ simply could not make her eyes behave, and whenever she flashed them on a member of the stronger sex, from that moment he was her abject slave. Her papa often reprimanded her for what he called flirting. But the poor girl could not help being vain of the power of her luminous orbs, and exercised this to the limit. However, when her father finds his clerks wildly fascinated, he decides to help them teach her a lesson, with what result the picture shows. Rel. April 1, 1912

The Brave Hunter

At the Hunting Lodge there arrives a great braggadocio who boasts that he, while in Africa, only went in quest of big game, showing a lot of skins as trophies of his expeditions. Out he starts, accoutered in the most approved fashion, to add to his already extensive collection by bringing back some more embryonic floor rugs, and he came near getting them -- or rather, they came near getting him. Rel. April 22, 1912

* from *Motion Picture Story Magazine*, May 1912

Popular Player Contest

The leaders of the contest, up to twelve o’clock noon, April first, were as follows:

Mae Hotely (Lubin).....	107,203
Maurice Costello (Vitagraph).....	92,320
Dolores Cassinelli (Essanay).....	81,768
Francis X. Bushman (Essanay).....	63,997
G. M. Anderson (Essanay).....	36,850
Alice Joyce (Kalem).....	29,661
....	
Mary Pickford.....	9,452

(listed 30th in list of 70)

Mabel Normand.....	2,677
(others listed:)	
John Bunny (Vitagraph).....	1,712
Ruth Roland (Kalem).....	1,569
Pearl White (Pathe’ Freres).....	1,311
Max Linder (Pathe’ Freres).....	1,092
Anna Q. Nilsson (Kalem).....	1,040

* from *Motion Picture Story Magazine*, June 1912

Popular Player Contest

The Winners

1st Prize, Maurice Costello (Vitagraph).....	430,816
2nd Prize, E. Dolores Cassinelli (Essanay).....	333,893
3rd Prize, Mae Hotely (Lubin).....	204,955
4th Prize, F. X. Bushman (Essanay).....	130,361
5th Prize, G. M. Anderson (Essanay).....	98,989

The Other Prize Winners

Alice Joyce (Kalem).....	72,021
Octavia Handworth (Pathe’ Freres).....	69,580
Florence Lawrence (Lubin).....	61,520
Arthur Johnson (Lubin).....	45,130
May Buckley (Lubin).....	41,104
Florence Turner (Vitagraph).....	31,925
Mary Pickford.....	24,726

(43rd in list of 100:)

Mabel Normand.....	3,056
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¹²⁰ Mabel’s real life sister, of course, was named Gladys.

(others listed:)

Pearl White (Pathe' Freres).....1,878

Max Linder (Pathe' Freres).....1,092

Leah Baird (Vitagraph).....1,002

* from **Biograph Bulletins**

Tomboy Bessie

Bessie is certainly a terror and manages without much trouble to get into all sorts of mischief. She gets tired of playing alone and schemes to have Andrew, the suitor of her Aunt Cissie, play with her. Andrew would rebel, but the injunction that he must amuse the kid, Bessie, or get out, makes him consent. The stunts she puts him through make him worthy of the bestowal of Cissie's hand in marriage. Rel. June 3, 1912

* from **Moving Picture World**, June 14, 1912

Biograph Company Goes East

The big event of the week among the producing companies was the departure of the Biograph company the night of May 27. The Biograph players have been working here all winter and now go to New York for the summer. The two directors, Griffith, who has charge of the dramatic releases, and Mack Sennett, who directs the comedies, are to stop over for a few days at Albuquerque, N. M.,¹²¹ where a couple of pictures are to be made.

* from **Biograph Bulletins**

A Dash Through the Clouds

Arthur and Martha are sweethearts, but Martha becomes fascinated with the sport of aeroplane riding, and later is infatuated with the aviator. Arthur is a tutti-frutti salesman and goes to a neighboring Mexican town to sell his gum. Here he is a "cut-up" among the ladies. The Mexicans incensed at Arthur's attentions to their sweethearts attempt vengeance. Arthur sends a boy with a note to Martha that his life is in danger at the hands of the Mexicans. This is where Martha and her aeroplane driver shine, for with the aeroplane they dash to the rescue. This is a farce comedy of a melodramatic type that has thrill in every foot. Rel. June 24, 1912

The Tourists

A party of tourists, on their way East across the continent take advantage of the short stop at Albuquerque, New Mexico, to purchase wares of the Indians congregated about the Indian Exhibits Building near the station. They become so engrossed in the Indians and their handiwork that they do not notice the time slipping by and their train slipping out. Left, they decide to make the best of it by sight-seeing until the next train arrives. Their experience in the interim was funny, unique and exciting. Rel. Aug. 5, 1912

What The Doctor Ordered

A Comedy of "Sunny" California

Jenks is a hypochondriac of the extreme type. Here he is at his villa, surrounded by flowers, gardens and orange groves. One would imagine that such a paradise would induce health and contentment in the most abject "gloom," but no, he believes that he has one foot in the grave, with the other one on slippery ground. The next hour he knows is to be his last. Hence, to humor him, his doctor orders him to the mountains. While there he is caught in a snow-storm, and his experiences make him glad to get back among the flowers. Rel. Aug. 5, 1912

An Interrupted Elopement

The father of Bob's sweetheart doesn't think much of him, which fact is made undeniably clear when papa, upon entering the house, surprises the loving couple together and kicks Bob into the street. Bob's friends suggest an elopement, to which plan he is heartily acquiescent. It was largely due to a trick of fate and Bob's quick wit that the plan succeeded. But, oh, what an experience! Rel. Aug. 15, 1912

The Tragedy of a Dress Suit

Down and out, Dick sits in the park despairing until a friend approaches, who bids him cheer up and come with him to meet some swell folks at the tennis court. Dick makes quite an impression upon a young heiress and is invited to attend a house party to be given by her the following evening. He, of course, must wear a dress suit, and to effect this proper raiment he surreptitiously borrows his landlord's -- but why spoil a good thing by saying more? Rel. Aug. 15, 1912

* Trade Ad from **The Moving Picture News**, August 24, 1912

First Release of

KEYSTONE FILMS

Monday, September 23

"Cohen Collects a Debt"

and

"The Water Nymph"

A split reel comedy, featuring Mack Sennett and Mabel Normand, the beautiful diving Venus.

— * —

On MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, two more rollicking comedies on one reel are presented in

¹²¹ It was during this eastward stop-over that the short *The Tourists* was filmed.

“Riley and Schultze”
and
“The New Neighbor”

A Split Reel Released every Monday
Lose No Time in Booking

Keystone Films are new in name only. They are produced by the company heretofore with the Biograph Co., and directed by the same man -- Mack Sennett. The quality of these films is well known to exhibitors.

Keystone Film Company
Mutual Film Corporation, 60 Wall St., New York City, Sole Agents for U.S. and Canada

* from the *Albuquerque Journal*, August 26, 1912

Miss Mabel Normand, the “Biograph Girl,” who appeared at a local theater last night, in pictures taken while the Biograph Company was appearing here last May, was a visitor here for a few minutes yesterday morning. With Miss Normand was Mack Sennett, who directed the staging of the picture.¹²²

Both of them have left the Biograph Company and are with an independent company, headed by Mr. Sennett. They were on their way to California, where they will appear in a number of films. The company will likely tour Japan and the Orient, staging pictures all the way.

The two were met here by a number of acquaintances and spent the half hour while the California limited stopped chatting with friends made they were here before.

Mr. Sennett declared that the Biograph Company would return to this city in October stop here he did not know.

* from *Fresno Morning Republican*, September 4, 1912

[advertisement]

Fresno Photo Theatre

“Hot or Cold – We Fool the Elements.”

Entire New Program Today

2 Dandy Biograph Comedies

1. “An Interrupted Elopement.” – A series of laughs.
2. “Little Keeper of the Light.” – A charming Kalem portrayal.
3. “Spring Log Driving in Maine.” – An excellent educational.
4. “Tragedy of a Dress Suit.” – Mabel Normand in a farce.
5. “Vultures and Doves.” – Powerful Vitagraph drama.
6. “Baseball Industry.” – See the Athletics and Senators in a fast and speedy baseball game.

* from *Moving Picture World*, September 14, 1912

Mack Sennett, director, and Mabel Normand, leading woman of the Keystone company of the New York Motion Picture Company, arrived in Los Angeles, August 28 as the advance guard of a new company which is to be located in the old Bison plant at Edendale. Both were formerly with the Biograph Company, and others from the same company are said to be coming later. The Keystone brand of films, according to reports, are to be produced from Los Angeles.

* from *Moving Picture World*, September 21, 1912

Preparations are also being made at Edendale for radical changes and extensions of the old Bison plant of the New York Motion Picture Co. Charles O. Bauman[n] and A. Kessel are here from New York for a personal inspection of the plant and Mack Sennett, the director of the new Keystone company, preceded them by a couple of days. Sennett with the assistance of Mabel Normand, Henry Lehrman and Ford Sterling, who came from New York with him, and Fred Mace, former director of Imp comedies, is already at work at the Edendale plant making comedies for future release. The balance of the company was employed here, being recruited from the ranks of other companies on the ground. Fred Balshofer has announced that there are to be two Western releases a week by Ince and Ford, two split reel comedies, one by Sennett and the other by Mace,¹²³ and one dramatic by a director who is coming on in a few days but whose identity is not to be revealed at this time. It is reported that Bauman and Kessel, before they return to New York, may have other important revelations to make.

* from *Hamilton Evening Journal* [Ohio], October 1, 1912

The Grand’s [theater] five acts for Tuesday and Wednesday nights are sure to please. A day at the fair will not be complete without a trip to the grand. For tonight and Wednesday the vaudeville acts will be McIntyre and Hamilton, eccentric comedians, and Wheeler & Emerson, singers and dancers. Tuesday night’s photoplays include “The New Neighbors,” a Keystone comedy with Mary [sic] Normand, the former Biograph diving girl in the leads [sic]. “Open to Proposals,” a Solax comedy, and “The Convict’s Hand,” a Gaumont feature, make up the bill.

¹²² The picture in question was *The Tourists* (1912).

¹²³ This statement is particularly interesting because it suggests that Fred Mace, contrary to what is known, may have directed some of the early keystones.

* from *Moving Picture World*, October 5, 1912

The old Bison plant at Edendale has now been turned over to the Keystone company, which comprises among others Fred Mace and Mabel Normand, with Mack Sennett as director, and split reel comedies are being turned out at a merry rate. The company is working much faster than its schedule of releases so as to pile up a surplus against possible accidents or other interruptions. Last week Sennett completed a 500-foot comedy in a single day and claims a record on the feat. The Keystone company is a distinct organization, having no official connection with any other motion picture company, although it is owned by men who also own the New York Motion Picture Company as well as other motion picture concerns.

* from *Motography*, October 12, 1912

The New York Motion Picture Company will enlarge its possessions the last of October, by the accession of the "101 Ranch Wild West." With the Indians it now has, the oxen, and cowboys, in addition to the ones now with the 101 Ranch Company on the road, the company expects to have approximately 100 Indians, 200 cowboys, 250 head of horses, 36 oxen, about 30 performing horses, and also the renowned horse, Snowball, stage coaches, prairie schooners and about 16 real teepees.

The Western company includes Mack Sennett, as director; Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Fred Mace and Harry Lehrman, formerly with the Biograph, who are posing for the Keystone brand of pictures.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, November 1912

Mabel Normand, called by some the "Divine Diver," formerly of the Vitagraph and Biograph companies, is now diving for the Keystone Company. Appropriately mixed in with her diving is that same winsome smile, pretty pout and vivacious action.

* from *Moving Picture World*, November 2, 1912

[advertisement]

KEYSTONE FILMS

The Keystone Stock Company comprises the largest aggregation of famous comedians in the world, the principals being Mack Sennett, Fred Mace, Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, and Alice Davenport. It is an All-Star Company.

A SPLIT REEL ON MONDAY, NOV. 4

Mabel's Lovers

Mabel arrives at the summer resort and has many lovers. Possessed of a beautiful figure, she decides to put the men to a test, and when donning her bathing suit fills her stockings with numerous bumps. When she discards her coat at the beach all the men beat a hasty retreat with the exception of one who peeped when Mabel was fixing up. Her next appearance in her bathing suit, minus the ungainly protuberances causes consternation among the men who have been fooled.

At It Again

The picture revives the travesty on Sherlock Holmes, in which Mack Sennett and Fred Mace won unbounded popularity. A woman receives an anonymous letter advising her that her husband is flirting, and engages the detectives. They track the wrong man and spy on him, arresting him in his own home while making love to his own wife. It develops that the man is a police captain, and the "sleuths" are punished for their error.¹²⁴

KEYSTONE FILM CO. 150 East 14th St., New York City

Mutual Film Corporation, 60 Wall Street Sole Agent for the U.S. and Canada

* from *New York Dramatic Mirror*, November 27, 1912

Actress Has Narrow Escape: Mabel Normand is Nearly Pounded to Death by Surf on Rocks

Los Angeles--Mabel Normand was the victim of a near tragedy last week, while working in one of Director Mack Sennett's Keystone productions near Topanga canyon. The heroine was lashed securely and placed on a jutting rock where the ocean breakers touched her. As the operator began to turn, a great breaker rolled in, snatching the helpless actress from her position and dashing her among the rocks of the beach. When rescued she was bruised and unconscious. Despite protests Miss Normand insisted upon finishing the picture, but it was done in a less dangerous place. The dailies made a thriller of the news story.

* from *Moving Picture World*, December 7, 1912¹²⁵

Some of the friends of Director [Thomas] Ince, of the Kay-Bee Company, decoyed him to the Venice Country Club the night of November 15, where he was made the victim of a gigantic conspiracy. When he arrived there were about 300 grown-ups waiting for him to remind him in a vociferous manner of something that had entirely slipped his mind, namely, that it was his birthday. Never mind, it was one that comes after 21.

All the members of the Kay-Bee and the Broncho companies were present and a number of specially invited guests from other motion picture companies in the vicinity, among the latter being Mack Sennett and Mabel Normand of the Keystone, and Mr. and Mrs. James Young Deer [James Young?] of the Pathe Western Company.

There was a banquet, an impromptu entertainment and a dance and it took until nearly 4 o'clock in the morning to run through the program. During the evening they made Ince stand up and look sheepish while a

¹²⁴ Earlier teamings of the two Sherlocks were *Trailing the Counterfeiters* (1911, Biograph), *Their First Divorce Case* (1911), *Caught with the Goods* (1911), *Their First Kidnapping Case* (1912); with *At It Again* being their first Keystone film together. Subsequent entries in the series were *A Bear Escape* (1912), *The Sleuths Last Stand* (1912), and *The Sleuths at the Floral Parade* (1912). *Motion Picture Story Magazine*, for December 1912, incidentally contains a five page re-telling of *At It Again*, with stills.

¹²⁵ Bruce Long: "(This) article was probably ghost-written, but it gives some additional details regarding the above incident. The film described as 'Lizzie's Sacrifice' was probably the same as 'For Lizzie's Sake,' which was released in the U.S.A. by Keystone on January 20, 1913. Also see *N.Y. Dramatic Mirror*, Nov. 27, 1912) and *Pictures and Picturegoer*, Aug. 8, 1914."

presentation speech was made as a preliminary to handing him a topaz ring, the big stone surrounded with small diamonds. The topaz is supposed to have special significance for those born in November. After that Ince made a speech forgiving everybody for their share in the conspiracy.

* from *Middletown Daily Times-Press*, December 10, 1912
[advertisement]

Gothic Hall -- Motion Pictures and Illustrated Songs
"The First Rose"
In Two Reels

One of the Thanhouser Company's greatest productions. Made and produced in Cuddebackville, N.Y.

"Cupid on the Job"
A Majestic Comedy

"A Romance of the Rockies"
A Powerful Western Drama.

"Cohen Collects a Debt"
On the Same Reel.

"The Water Nymph"
Featuring Mabel Normand, Fred Mace and Mack Sennett, late of the Biograph Company.

REELS FOR 5 CENTS

1913

* from *Variety*, January 10, 1913

What They Get

...There are some high-priced photo-players in the United States. While there are many leading film people who do not receive immense salaries, yet the figure they command is good the whole year round and that is more comfort than working the legitimate stage at a bigger salary for a short season.

Of the leads Maurice Costello, Vitagraph; Fred Mace, Keystone, and King Baggott, Imp, are probably the best paid, although there are dozens who get from \$100 to \$150 per week.

Of women, Mabel Normand, the "diving girl," formerly heading the Biograph Co., now with the Keystone, and Florence Turner, of the Vitagraph, are considered the biggest money getters.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 1913

Little Mabel Normand, leading woman with the Keystone company, who is to lead the grand march of the photoplayers' ball with President Mace, Saturday evening, has had many hazardous experiences during her career as a photoplayer.

She says that while most people believe there are not risks to be taken in the making of comedy pictures, conditions are quite the reverse. In comedy, with which Miss Normand has been identified since her advent into the picture-making profession, action alone scores. In dramatic pictures, the spectator is given time to fathom the story and the action is much slower.

"In comedies," asserts the dainty little Mabel, "we have risks as great, if not greater, than those necessary in dramas.

"About a year ago, I made an aeroplane flight with the late Phil Parmalee.¹²⁶ It was my first time in the air. We reached an altitude of about 1000 feet, and suddenly the engine went dead. It seemed that one could have heard the proverbial pin drop.

"Gliding down, we landed unhurt. Mr. Parmalee discovered that his gasoline had been tampered with; and in some way paraffine had worked into the carburetor. When I was told of this, I realized the danger to which we had been exposed; but the picture had to be made, and several more flights were necessary."

Miss Normand has had many adventures, such as being thrown from cliffs and into the ocean; but aside from a few scratches and bruises, she has never been injured.

A short time ago she was tied to a rock in Santa Monica Bay, about 100 feet from the shore. The continual breaking of the waves over her body washed her adrift. She has always been considered a clever swimmer, but was unable to successfully battle with the waves in her weakened condition. As she was sinking, members of the company came to her assistance and carried her to the shore.

"With all its risks and hard work," says the little actress, "there is a certain fascination about the profession which holds one. I went into pictures three years ago without any previous experience, out of a convent.

"Since then I have played in a picture and a half a week without a break.

"They say I have made good and I will very probably play in pictures for the rest of my days."

¹²⁶ The incident described here took place during the filming of *A Dash Through the Clouds*. Parmalee, incidentally, was subsequently killed in a flying accident that occurred in Yakima, Washington on June 1, 1912 (see *New York Times*, June 2, 1912.)

* from *The New York Clipper*, February 15, 1913

Recently in Los Angeles the photoplayers residing there voted Mabel Normand, of Keystone, the most popular woman in motion pictures. Miss Normand will lead the grand march, with Fred Mace, at the photoplayers' ball, to be held on Feb. 14, at the Shrine Auditorium.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1913

Mabel Normand started something big when she appeared at the Garrick Theater in person Thursday night and was introduced during both performances.

This custom is to be followed regularly, and Fred Mace is to be introduced tomorrow evening. After the members of the Keystone company have all been presented the Tannhauser company is to be introduced one and a time. When Miss Normand appeared 1500 feet of films in which she was shown were run off.

* from *Variety*, March 14, 1913

The success of the "face to face" ball of the Photoplayers is still being talked of. All agree Mabel Normand was a lovely, graceful moving picture as she led the march with President Fred Mace who looked correspondingly proud.

* from *Motography*, March 15, 1913

Barney Oldfield in Keystone Speed Film¹²⁷

Mack Sennett, the Keystone director, finished a picture recently in which speed is shown to an exaggerated degree. Barney Oldfield races his Benz at ninety miles an hour against a Santa Fe train, traveling at the rate of sixty five miles an hour, and rescues Mabel Normand, who is tied to the tracks.

Through the courtesy of E. W. McGee, general passenger agent for the Santa Fe, the Keystone director was granted the use of the old Redondo road and a late model locomotive, baggage car and passenger coach. A special permit was granted by the authorities of Inglewood, for Barney to go the limit in the speed line.

The villain, Ford Sterling, ties Miss Normand to the tracks, climbs into the cab of the locomotive and with a blow on the head renders Engineer McNeil of the Santa Fe, unconscious and with the throttle wide open dashes down the track.

Mack Sennett, the lover, discovers Barney's car. He calls the speed king and asks him to help him save the girl. Oldfield jumps into the car and pulling Sennett into the seat beside him, dashes down the road in pursuit.

Lee Bartholomew, standing on the running board of the locomotive photographs every move of the villain at the throttle, while Walter Wright with another camera, catches the race between the train and the automobile and the rescue.

The climax comes when Oldfield rounds a curve at fifty miles an hour, stops the car and Sennett jumps out and rescues Miss Normand from the shadow of the approaching train. The race continues along the road and from the cab Sterling throws bombs at the car which gradually pulls away from the train as Barney hits the ninety mile pace.

* from *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*, March 27, 1913

The Sleuths at the Floral Parade

Advantage was taken of the fact that a floral parade was being held at Pasadena, Cal., in which the Keystone car was entered and won second prize to produce a comedy film around the incident.¹²⁸ Fred Mace and Mabel Normand are invited to take part in the parade, and Mack Sennett plans to keep her away and take her place. Accordingly Mabel is locked up in her dressing room, but she escapes after considerable difficulty. She rushes to the line or march and makes frantic and amusing efforts to catch the Keystone automobile, while the two sleuths attempt to dodge her. Mabel gets into difficulties with the police who are endeavoring to maintain order and is championed by Ford Sterling, who is among the spectators. She finally gains her rightful place in the auto.

* from *Fairbanks Sunday Times* [Alaska], April 20, 1913

A Pathé Weekly, showing the current events the world over for a week, is to feature the Lorentzen program this evening at Eagle hall. The other pictures are of a high order, and Mr. Lorentzen promises to please the throng of showgoers who will flock to Eagle hall after 8 o'clock this evening.

Three comedies and one biblical play make up the rest of the program, and the 4,000 feet of new film will make up as well-balanced and interesting a program as has been shown in many a day.

"Joseph in Egypt," by the Cines company, is a well-produced biblical play. The other pictures are "Fatal Chocolate" and "Got a Match?" two good comedies on one reel by the Biograph company; "Dodging the Sheriff," a Western comedy by the Melies players.

The first show starts at 8 o'clock and the second will follow. Twenty-five cents admission will be charged.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, May 1913

Roy B. Cook, of Chicago, Ill., writes this clever verse for Mabel Normand:

To Miss Normand.

Who is the maiden I like the best

Of all the films I see?

The problem is hard for one to guess,

But Miss Normand's the one for me.

There isn't a doubt as to her fame,

¹²⁷ The film spoken of here is *Barney Oldfield's Race for a Life*.

¹²⁸ The Keystone entry did actually win second place in the "class T automobile, gasoline, capacity of four or more persons \$50 silver trophy and red banner, Keystone Film Company." *Los Angeles Times* Jan. 2, 1913.

*For once her face you've seen,
You'll always remember the big, black eyes
Of the Motion Picture queen.*

*Oh! She is the prettiest, she is the wittiest,
She's the one I like to see.
Oh! she is the dearest girl there is ¾
Miss Normand's the one for me.*

* from **Motography**, May 3, 1913

Comedy-Melodramas Popular

The Keystone Film Company, with Mack Sennett's master hand at the wheel is presenting a new variety of film at the present time, which marks a departure in the picture game. Mack calls them comedy-melodramas and judging from the praise of exhibitors throughout the country they are great. The stories have a well defined plot, filled with thrilling incidents and intense moments, while a light vein of comedy running all the way through the picture provides excellent relief and much laughter.

* from **Variety**, May 9, 1913

The Keystone Company left here for Mexico. It expects to be away for some weeks. Mabel Normand (Keystone) is off to Fresno for a short vacation, although I don't imagine she will rest much.

* from **Variety**, May 16, 1913

Mabel Normand now runs her own car, a Marion, and is already a speed fiend. She drove her car this week to Tia Juana, Mexico, where Keystone is now working.¹²⁹

* from **Motography**, May 17, 1913

· from interview with Fred Mace:

..."Sennett and I have been looked upon as an established fact," he ruminated, "and of course, we were. We worked together in Biograph films and went to Keystone at the same time and are still the best of friends. All of us in Keystone worked fine together, and Mabel Normand is one of the best little actresses I know. The only trouble I had with her were the times she'd start giggling and couldn't stop; she's a wonderful giggler."

* from **Variety**, May 31, 1913

The Keystone company has returned from Mexico. Their director tells me he has "some great stuff."

* from **The New York Clipper**, May 31, 1913

Mabel Normand received an ovation in San Francisco, Cal, recently, when she arrived in that city on a short vacation. The throngs about the train as she stopped off demanded a word from their favorite screen star and Miss Normand made a pretty little speech of thanks, although confessing afterwards that she was considerably flustered by her reception.

* from **Motion Picture Story Magazine**, June 1913

To Mabel Normand

*The sweetest girl I've ever seen
Upon the motion picture screen
Is a dear little maiden, with winsome smile
That's got other stars beat a mile
Her ways are cute, has a pretty pout
You can always guess what she's about
She used to act for the A. B.,
But now has left it, as you all see:
Has gone to another company, fair
To continue her captivating acting there.*

Nat Miller
526 East 156th Street
New York City

* from **Moving Picture World**, June 7, 1913

There was something doing every moment on Photo Player's Day in San Francisco. The Motion Picture Exhibitors' League worked hard to make May 2nd, a day worthy of remembrance, and they were paid for their efforts by a grand turn-out all along the line of parade. A fact worthy of note in passing was the general comment by everyone that there were three times as many people lining the curbs to watch the parade as there were the previous day to see the big circus parade.

¹²⁹ See Gene Fowler's *Father Goose*, pp. 160-172, for an anecdotal account of Keystone's temporary sojourn in Mexico. As Brent Walker explains, about late April 1913, several of the Keystone company left Los Angeles for Mexico; in order to avoid some of its male members being possibly subpoenaed in the Evelyn Quick case, with respect to the charge of contributing to the delinquency of minor. Quick, with some other girls with film ties, had been caught "entertaining" male guest at two local country clubs. The temporary Keystone exiles then were away in Mexico about four to six weeks filming. *Mack Sennett's Fun Factory* p. 34.

The excitement began at 9:30 in the morning, with the arrival of Mabel Normand of the Keystone Company, Carlyle Blackwell of the Kalem Company, and Miss Anne Schaeffer and George C. Stanley of the Western Vitagraph Company. The players were met by State Secretary, W. A. Cory, and representatives of the Golden Gate and General Film Exchange, who took the players to their hotel, where they made ready for the pageant which started at noon at Van Ness Ave. and Market Street.

Mabel Normand having been voted the most popular player in California was chosen queen of the occasion, and occupied the first automobile with Carlyle Blackwell and W.A. Cory and wife. Then came the two Vitagraphers, and following them, Mr. Gilbert M. Anderson, the popular "Broncho Billy" of the Essanay Company, followed by twenty-four of Anderson's daring cowboys and cowgirls in picture costumes and mounted on their cow-ponies. The famous old stage coach which we have seen "Broncho Billy" hold up countless times was also there in all its glory. Several beautiful floats, representing miniature picture shows, and other spectacular features followed. Next came the members of the San Francisco and Oakland Exhibitor's Leagues in gaily decorated automobiles, headed by a band of twenty pieces. The parade made a beautiful spectacle, and proved the best sort of advertising for the ball which opened at 9:30 that night with Mayor and Mrs. [James] Rolph leading the grand march. Following Mayor and Mrs. Rolph came the visiting actors and actresses, the committee in charge of arrangement and their ladies, with Anderson's cowboys and cowgirls dressed in Wild West costume, followed by the different members of the league and the dancers.

The actors and actresses were introduced by Chairman Cory, and made happy little speeches, which were greatly appreciated by the great throngs present. The only one to avoid making a speech was "Alkali Ike"¹³⁰ who, owing to his diminutive stature was enabled to hide behind the skirts of some kind lady and could not be found until the dancing was well under way.

Motion Pictures of the parade which were taken by Miles Brothers, and were exhibited on a screen, caused a great deal of merriment among the spectators as they recognized themselves in the photographs...

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Motion pictures of the parade, which were taken by Miles Brothers, and were exhibited on a screen, caused a great deal of merriment among the spectators as they recognized themselves in the photographs.

No expense was spared in the management of the affair; the aim of the committee being to boost the business in general, rather than make money out of this particular occasion. The entire Scottish Rite Temple, which is the most beautiful building of its kind in San Francisco, was rented for the occasion, one floor being reserved for society dances, another for those who wanted to rag, large orchestras being provided in each hall. This arrangement left everybody happy, and the crowd divided up according to individual taste. The ball broke up about two o'clock Saturday morning, with everybody voting it a grand success, and eagerly awaiting next year's second annual grand ball.

* from *Variety*, June 27, 1913

Ford Sterling was badly injured last week while working in a Keystone picture. In an exciting scene it was Mr. Sterling's business to throw a bomb from a stage coach. The bomb exploded, igniting some powder in the coach. He is certain to lose several fingers and is suffering intensely from body burns. Mabel Normand, with him in the coach, was severely shaken up, but otherwise unharmed. Mr. Sterling has been doing some splendid work recently. Mack Sennett is much upset over the affair.

¹³⁰ Essanay comedian, Augustus Carney.

* from *Motography*, July 12, 1913

Mabel Is Very Popular

Mabel Normand received an ovation in San Francisco, Cal., recently when she arrived in that city to enjoy a short vacation. The throngs about the train as she stepped off demanded a word from their favorite screen star, and Miss Normand made a pretty little speech of thanks, although confessing afterwards that she was considerably influenced by her reception.

* from *Moving Picture World*, July 12, 1913

THE TELLTALE LIGHT, (Keystone): July 10 -- In this feel kissing and spooning gun riot, the Anti-Spooning Club winds up with everybody practicing the art of osculation. Mabel turns the searchlight on everyone in turn. This reel, as may be imagined, is not of an elevated type, and we did not consider it very amusing, but it will undoubtedly appeal to certain audiences.

* from *Moving Picture World*, July 26, 1913

LOVE AND COURAGE, (Keystone), July 21 -- Mabel's lovers become involved in a running fight. There are touches of vulgarity in this which might well have been avoided.

A NOISE FROM THE DEEP, (Keystone), July 17 -- This is one of the screamingly funny concoctions, which made this company famous as a purveyor of nonsense. It begins with throwing pies and then Mabel and her lover go bicycling. Mabel falls into the lake and the lover flees for help. The fat boy, Bob, saves her. This is but the beginning of the fun. A hose is employed to gurgle in the water which makes everyone think Mabel is still in the lake. The police force comes to the rescue on bucking bronchos. Very funny and free from coarseness of any kind.

* from *Motography*, July 26, 1913

Mabel Normand has taken a brief respite from her strenuous duties at the Keystone studio, and instead of falling out of aeroplanes, riding in a mile-a-minute automobiles, and plunging from dizzy heights into the water, a few of the stunts which she performs in the films, Mabel is quietly resting in San Francisco.

* from *Moving Picture World*, August 9, 1913

PROF. BEAN'S REMOVAL, (Keystone), July 31 -- Quite an amusing number, in the rough style of this company's well-known nonsense. Mabel and Ford practice so violently on their trombones that the neighbors move the house one evening. An actual moving house is shown, and it is some time before the audience learns what is going on. Something new and different, without any particular offensiveness.

* from *Motion Picture News*, August 9, 1913

Miss Mabel Normand, whose picture is presented on our cover this week, is the charming leading lady of the Keystone Film Company, and is considered one of the most beautiful as well as capable artists on the screen.

Before her present connection with the Keystone Company, Miss Normand was well and favorably known as a clever performer, both with the Vitagraph and later with the Biograph Company. Her work with these two organizations attracted considerable attention and praise and when the Keystone Film Company was formed Miss Normand was taken over, together with Mack Sennett, Fred Mace and Ford Sterling. This famous company of fun-makers made an enviable reputation for themselves while the Biograph Company and the Keystone Film Company are to be complimented on their business acumen in securing these prominent players.

Miss Normand, besides her personal charm and beauty, has an original style all her own while working in pictures and in the particular style of comedy which the above company is now making a specialty of. Miss Normand has attracted attention by her work from picture-play fans all over the country.

She is an accomplished horsewoman and a champion swimmer and high diver and before entering picture work was recognized as one of the best women swimmers in the world. She is athletic to a degree and fond of outdoor sports of all kinds, in many of which she excels her male competitors.

* from *Moving Picture World*, August 13, 1913

Prof. Bean's Removal

Prof. Bean and his daughter are enthusiastic cornetists, to the distress of the neighbors. Their efforts to have the noise stopped meets with no success, as Prof. Bean and Mabel put them all to rout. The landlord takes a hand, accompanied by police, but Prof. Bean and his trusty gun convinces them that discretion is the better part of valor. The other tenants threaten to move, and in desperation the landlord places the house on automobile trucks and moves it away in the dead of night. The Professor and Mabel are awakened by being thrown out of their beds by the jostling of the house and, rushing to the door, find themselves moving rapidly down the street.

* from *Moving Picture World*, August 16, 1913

THE RIOT (Keystone), August 7 -- Here is a full reel given over to a free-for-all fight, in which bricks and bombs are thrown and the police, fire department and militia respond to quell the riot. It all begins over Cohen's saleslady, whose parcels are opened by the Irish children. A race war ensues and the situations contain a lot of harmless amusement, free from vulgarity.

* from *Moving Picture World*, September 6, 1913

MABEL'S NEW HERO, (Keystone), August 28 -- A full reel comedy containing much that is genuinely funny, but also many broad, suggestive situations which will not commend it to the best houses; in fact much of it is unfit for presentation any where.

* from *Moving Picture World*, September 13, 1913

THE GYPSY QUEEN, (Keystone), September 11 -- A good burlesque offering, free from offense, in which Mabel Normand appears as the Gypsy queen. The fat boy is tied to a tree, and as the live snake crawls toward him, Mabel hatches up schemes for stopping the approaching rescuers. Quite laughable in places. A full reel number.

* from *Ogden Standard* [Humeston, Iowa], September 24, 1913

Nothing gives greater delight to Mabel Normand than to do the part of a diving girl in the Keystone productions. She is possessed of a figure which would cause Venus de Milo and Annette Kellerman "to go some" and could give the latter young lady the race of her life in the water. She had medals galore for swimming and high diving and has handily beaten many contenders, both male and female, for championship honors, and when the Keystone company was producing at Coney Island last summer the fair Mabel was the cynosure of all eyes.

* from *Moving Picture World*, September 27, 1913

MABEL'S DRAMATIC CAREER, (Keystone), Sept. 8 Good humor and extreme vulgarity are closely intermingled in this. Much of the latter can be cut out. It is difficult to see why a company with such splendid opportunities for appealing to all houses should appeal only to the less particular ones.

* from *Moving Picture World*, September 27, 1913

THE BOWLING MATCH, (Keystone), Sept. 29 -- An amusing bowling match between Messrs. Sauer and Kraut. The balls and pins are manipulated by an electric magnet and perform some queer antics. There is, of course, the usual roughhouse finish, with Ford and Mabel in the important parts. Good fun, without offense.

* from *Moving Picture World*, October 4, 1913

THE FATAL TAXICAB, (Keystone), September 18 -- A typical amusing offering of the burlesque type, in which Sterling, Mabel and the Fat boy come into a new series of adventures. The Italian Count is pursued by the Keystone police. His auto falls over a cliff and lodges in a tree. Nothing offensive in this, but some rattling good nonsense with which to enliven a program.

* from *Moving Picture World*, October 4, 1913

WHEN DREAMS COME TRUE, (Keystone), September 22 -- This burlesque offering is of rather coarse humor and will not appeal to all audiences. The suitcase full of live snakes creates havoc in Sterling's bedroom. He dashes out in his night clothes and there is much rough and tumble excitement, in which the snakes play a large part.

* from *Waterloo Reporter* [Iowa], October 25, 1913

A very successful and exciting Keystone comedy "Speed Kings," just finished, shows Santa Monica and the Corona races. Earl Cooper winner of both is used in this subject, as well as his Stutz number, eight, present holder of the world's road races record. Teddy Tetzlaff, another world's speed champion, is also used along with Barney Oldfield [Oldfield], Ralph De Palma, Spencer Wisheart [Wishart] and several more of the racing celebrities of this and foreign countries.

* from *Motography*, November 1, 1913

Mack Sennett, managing director of the Keystone films has added a new burden to his shoulders. He has taken twenty little boys and girls, ranging from the age of four to twelve years, and is training them for the pictures. They will be seen shortly in "kid" comedies.¹³¹

* from *Motography*, November 1, 1913

A picture just finished by the Keystone Company, "Love Sickness at Sea," was made upon the Pacific Coast Steamship Company's boat "Harvard," the fastest passenger carrying ship that floats the American flag. This ship was chartered by the Keystone Company and during a run, down and up the coast, a full reel was made. This picture portrays the extensive improvements that have been made in fire drills aboard sea-going vessels, and this was used as a basis upon which a great comedy was made. A company of fifty people made this trip, and over two hundred of employees of the boat were used in the films.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, November 7, 1913

MABEL NORMAND DRIVES TROTTER TO A RECORD.

A World's record for a trotter driven by a lady was made yesterday at Exposition Park, when "Escobedo," 2:09 was driven by Miss Mabel Normand of the Keystone Film Company a quarter of a mile in 31 seconds, which is at the rate of one in two minutes and four seconds.

The drive was first staged as a "stunt" for a moving picture con concern, and developed into a trial against time when it was seen that Miss Normand was getting the very best gait out Escobedo.

This finish of the trial against time was exciting Goldenut, a speedy sorrel had been selected by E. J. Delorey, secretary of the Los Angeles Harness Horse Association, who owns Escobedo, as the horse with which he would accompany Miss Normand in the trial. Goldenut has a record a second or so faster than Escobedo and therefore was thought perfectly able to keep Mr. Delorey within talking distance of his big trotter while Miss Normand was driving.

Escobedo must have become excited over the pilot [plot?] of the "movie," for he trotted faster for this inexperienced girl driver than his trainers ever have been able to force him this summer, and finished the quarter in 31 seconds. In fact, so fast was the furious drive of the finish that Goldenut, the fleet trotter, driven by Mr. Delorey,

¹³¹ These early Sennett "kid" comedies were progenitors of Hal Roach's Our Gang and Little Rascals films.

broke just short of the wire, showing plainly that the animal had been driven off his feet by Miss Normand driving Escobedo.

The showing made in this brush determined Mr. Delorey to enter his horse in two of the events of the big race meet next week, a thing which he had been holding in abundance for some time owing to the rather slow time made by his horse.

* from *Photoplay*, December 1913

Mabel Normand wrote me the other day about her trip in a dirigible balloon.¹³² She was working in a picture and the director induced her to climb into the basket of the balloon. "The first thing we knew," she said, "we were going up -- and I was scared to death. I thought my time had come. We got up about two hundred feet when Mack Sennett (who was directing the picture, and pretending the going up of the balloon was an accident) yelled to climb down the rope hanging from the basket, as they had caught the anchor under a pier. Well, imagine me, if you can, with a bathing suit on, sliding down a rope. When I landed on the good old sand of Santa Monica beach I was about the happiest mortal alive, and Mack says if he could have gotten a picture of the things I said to him he is sure it would have surpassed any Rembrandt in J. Pierpoint Morgan's collection. I dare say they won't turn me loose in any more balloons soon."

* from *Motion Picture News*, December 13, 1913

Mabel Normand, leading woman with Keystone, will hereafter direct every picture in which she appears. Madame Blache [Alice Guy-Blaché] has been the only woman director for some time, but she now has a rival in Mabel who will both act and direct.

* from *Moving Picture World*, December 13, 1913

Mabel Normand, leading woman of the Keystone co. since its inception, is in future to direct every picture she acts in. This will undoubtedly make Keystone more popular than ever, and this will give Miss Normand the opportunity of injecting her comedy, which she has never had an opportunity to put over before.

* from *Motography*, December 13, 1913

Keystone Two Reelers Full of Laughs

Ford Sterling displays all his tricks of walk and facial movement in the Mack Sennett two-reel comedy entitled, "Zuzu, the Band Leader." Mabel Normand found the tightest jacket and the fullest skirt in California, seemingly, in which to play the role of the love struck girl who "couldn't make her eyes behave" when they gazed upon the wonderful band-leader. They, the eyes, insisting on crossing, to the consternation of her escort, and the confusing of the baton and direction of Zuzu. But all the women fell in love with Zuzu, so little Mabel didn't have a chance at his affections and, with her desperate escort, made Zuzu's life miserable for him. It's a particularly funny two reels, and one of the best Keystones yet.

* from *Lexington Herald*, December 30, 1913

[advertisement]
"The Champion"

Keystone. A first-class horse racing burlesque, with exceptionally clever plot, directed by Mabel Normand, who appears in the title role.

* Shooting script for *Mabel's Strange Predicament*, dated January 10, 1914, Mack Sennett papers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences¹³³

Husband and wife, and Mabel are staying at same hotel. Mabel is romping with her pet dog in hotel yard when her sweet heart comes on and talks with her. In next set husband and wife are sitting. Wife leaves set for moment to get something. During her absence Mabel's dog's ball rolls into husband's set. Husband picks it up, as Mabel comes on, and takes his time in presenting it. Wife comes on to husband and Mabel and upbraids husband. Lover from first set sees and comes to husband, wife and Mabel. Recognizes husband as friend and calms the group down somewhat. Wife now takes husband into hotel and Mabel bids lover good bye and also goes into building.

Their rooms adjoin and Mabel, as soon as she comes in, starts playing with her dog again. The noise penetrates partition and the wife already harboring a feeling against Mabel exits to complain to manager about noise. Meanwhile, Mabel has prepared for bed and is in her pajamas. In playing with dog again, the ball rolls out into the public hall. Mabel looks about and seeing no one goes after it. Dog inside room, in trying to follow her, jumps against door, the spring lock catches and Mabel is locked in hall in her pajamas. At this point drunk comes along and tries to flirt with Mabel. In a panic, she tries the next room's door and enters husband's room. Latter is standing at mirror and does not observe her. She hides under bed.

Meanwhile, Mabel's lover has taken notion to call and comes to her room. Finds it locked. Looks through key hole and sees Mabel's dog. Passing janitor unlocks door for him and dog emerges. As Mabel is not at home, lover decides to call on husband next door. Enters. He and husband hold conversation. Meanwhile, in hall Mabel's dog has found her trail and enters and goes to bed wagging tail. Mabel under bed tries to make him go away. Lover and husband notice dog and discover Mabel. Lover starts to beat husband when the three of them hear wife and manager coming. Do not want manager to know seeming scandal, so husband and lover agree to keep quiet. Wife and manager enter. Wife peeved at lover, orders him out. He and manager exit. Wife and husband alone. Wife calming down and almost reconciled when she discovers Mabel under bed in pajamas.

¹³² The film referred to here is *Mabel's New Hero*.

¹³³ *Mabel's Strange Predicament* was Mabel's first film with Chaplin, and the second in which Chaplin appeared in his tramp costume (according to some scholars possibly the first.) Chaplin's character is referred to here as the "drunk." In the actual film, Chaplin takes a greater part in the story's action than this script originally calls for.

Consternation, etc.

1914

* from *Reel Life*, January 1, 1914

One of the enjoyable events of the winter was the New Years Eve party given in the Country Club room Wednesday evening, December 31st. Mr. Thomas H. Ince. Vice-President and General Manager of the New York Motion Picture company, and Mr. Mack Sennett, President and General Manager of the Keystone Film Company, entertained fully three hundred leaders of the artists employed in their moving picture companies now wintering in Southern California. They were those whose faces are familiar to all who patronize the moving picture theatres and among them were some of the most prominent people in the moving picture world as well as those well known on the legitimate stage.

The grounds were beautifully illuminated with Japanese lanterns and the rooms were handsomely decorated with natural flowers; a huge punch bowl was never empty although every possible attempt was made to reach the bottom of it. Music for dancing was furnished by a full string orchestra, with a quartet of cabaret entertainers and dancing was indulged in until long after the New Year had been welcomed. As old 1913 passed away the rooms were thrown into darkness and a huge firework set piece typifying the passing of 1913 with Old Father Time and his scythe and Cupid as 1914 was illuminated on the spacious lawn.

Supper was served at which Mr. Ince acted as toastmaster and all that was good in 1913 was toasted and all that was expected of 1914 wished for in toasts which were drunk standing and the absent ones were not forgotten, for while the orchestra played "Auld Lang Syne," toasts were drunk to Messrs. Baumann, Kessel, Hite and Aitken.

Among those present, well known in the theatrical world as well as filmdom, were George Osborne, Walter Belasco, Hershell Mayall, David M. Hartford, Charles Giblyn, Walter Edwards, Herbert Standing, Mabel Normand, Anna Little, Louis Morrison, Jay Hunt, Thomas Chatterton, Richard Stanton, Ford Sterling, Clara Williams, Rhea Mitchell, Gertrude Claire, Fannie Midgley and many others.

It was indeed one of the most enjoyable events that has ever been held in the Country Club rooms, and those of the City's residents who were honored with invitations will remember the occasion with much pleasure.

* from *The Sunday Oregonian* (Portland), January 25, 1914

MOVIE ACTRESS, 20 YEARS OLD IS HER OWN MANAGER

Miss Normand dares Death Cheerfully and Often in Order to Provide Thrills for Patrons of Film Dramatic Productions.¹³⁴

Los Angeles, Jan. 24—(Special)—To the producers and managers of the movies Miss Mable [sic] Normand constitutes the eight wonder of the world.

Barely 20 years old she has not only proved herself a capable actress and risen to the position of a star in the motion picture world, but has actually become the manager of her own company, and honor which only one woman in America shares with her.

Probably Miss Normand has given to her audiences more thrills than any other movie actress whose face and form have been seen to flit across the silent screen. Time after time has she stood face to faith with death. Danger is a daily experience. Expert swimmer and horsewoman as she is, she nevertheless barely has escaped time after time with her life, and the heart of the motion picture operator has many a time jumped into his mouth, as the saying goes, when photographing her daring feats.

Rescue Just in Time.

It was not many months ago that Miss Normand was to play the part of a young heroine who, bound, gagged rising [sic] until she was rescued by her lover. All would have gone well had not the unexpected happened. A strong wind had been blowing for some time inshore and just before the exciting climax of the drama was to take place, a tidal wave of immense height came rolling in across the bay and engulfed Miss Normand so effectually that she was under water for several minutes before her rescue could be effected. She was in bed for more than a week as the result of the shock, but the plucky young woman determined to reproduce this scene and complete the drama as soon she arose from her bed, against the wishes of the manager and her fellow actors and actresses. She had herself again bound to the rock, again was she gagged and left for several minutes to the caprices of the elements and the rushing waters. This time, however, her rescuer was more successful and they succeeded in taking a thrilling film of Miss Normand being rescued by a staunch lover.

This incident will serve to show the daring and courage of the young woman, factors which are so necessary to all movie actresses.

Girl Afire in a Taxicab.

It was not long after the incident above mentioned that Miss Normand was caught in a taxi accident. In one of the films, during an elopement from her angry parents. The automobile was going at a furious rate down a steep decline, when something happened and the gasoline tank caught fire. In a moment the whole machine was enveloped in flames. She succeeded in opening the door amid the blinding flames and heavy pall of smoke, and jumped from the taxi her dress afire. She threw herself upon the ground and by means of rolling over and over and covering herself with

¹³⁴ This article, while largely a compendium of Sennett publicist fiction mingled with and based on both actual and distorted fact, is nonetheless significant in that it anticipates or predicts a) climatic sequences in *My Valet* (1915) as where Mabel is tied to a rock in the ocean and one where she rescues the would-be hero (in *My Valet* it is actually the villain Fred Mace whom she rescues); b) Mabel having her own studio at the time of *Mickey* (1916-1918), and c) the blimp sequence in "Molly O'" (1921). Other incidents described can be traced to shorts already made at that time, such as *The Brave Hunter* (1912), and possibly other films made by the date of this article but which have not survived; so that, for example, the business of having her bound to a rock in the ocean *may* have been utilized prior to *My Valet*.

handfuls of earth she succeeded finally in extinguishing the flaming garments before the fire had reached her head or hair.

Dangers of this kind are taken lightly by Miss Normand and by many another movie actress. They must be if they are to play in the profession. If a picture falls through some accident or neglect on the part of the actors, it must be re-acted [i.e., re-acted], no matter how great the danger may be. All movie stars are bound to do this. Many of them have rehearsed falls from horseback while the horse is tearing along full gallop, and in such cases before the film is completed and ready to bring before the breathless public, the movie star was bruised and battered from head to foot.

Girl Jumps from Aeroplane.

Some dramatic films, however, are of such a nature that they cannot well be rehearsed, and the actors and film producers must alike take chances of success or failure at first trial. One incident of this character was that in which Miss Normand jumped from a flying aeroplane into the water below—a distance of nearly 15 feet. This was a scene in which Miss Normand had been kidnaped and was being carried away, and her only avenue of escape was to jump. Jump she did, and the rapidly moving film caught her slim, lithe form as it plunged downward through space during what seemed to the operator as interminable time before it reached the water. Was she safe? Had she been injured by her fall? Was she drowning? It was impossible to launch boats to obtain the answer to these questions, for they would have shown in the picture. As the seconds passed and she failed to appear, the silence grew tense. The emotion of the onlookers became keener and keener. A human life was at stake. Could they, in conscience, allow her to run the risk of drowning merely for the sake of a film? The heartbeats of the usually blasé operator could be almost heard as he went on winding and winding his film.

A slight ripple and then, a moment later, her head appeared above the surface. A burst of applause greeted her as she struck out to the shore—the aeroplane appearing but now a speck in the distant sky.

Balloon Ascension Made.

A somewhat similar and equally daring escape was made by Miss Normand within a few weeks of this in the film entitled "The Love of Mable [sic]," in which she was starring at the time. Here Miss Normand in a bathing suit, made an ascension in a balloon from which a long rope was dangling. She rose with it until the balloon appeared like a tiny speck in the distant clouds. Here the occupants of the car were shown at close quarters, so that the role of her daring escape might be followed by the spectators.

Miss Normand, who in the play is supposed to make the ascension just in the spirit of fun, is at this point the subject of unscrupulous attentions on the part of her captor, and to evade him, she decides to leap over the side of the balloon and climb down the rope which extended from its basket to the glistening waters of the bay beneath. She swings her body over the opposite side and clambers down hand over hand, the car swaying and jolting as her body descends. She is nearly a mile above the earth. The time she takes in descending this rope seems never-ending, but to the onlooker it is one of the most thrilling feats recorded upon the movie films.

Finally the water is reached. She drops lightly from the rope, slips into the water and strikes out for the nearest boat.

Girl Rescues "Hero."

Making films of this character presents, sometimes, features of curious interest and even humor, and are not all tragic or hair-raising as the reader might suppose. For instance, on one occasion, Miss Normand was supposed to be rescued by her sweet-heart, a stout enough hero who swam out pluckily to prevent her from meeting an untimely end as she struggled helplessly in the waters of the ocean. As luck would have it, the hero, when a few yards away from her, was suddenly seized with a violent cramp and throwing up his arms suddenly disappeared. Miss Normand saw instantly there was no time to waste. Ceasing her feigned struggles, she reached his side with a few swift deft strokes, and succeeded after some efforts in rescuing her rescuer.

One of the incidents that Miss Normand cares most to remember is that connected with a big black bear known for his vicious temper and dislike for human society. No one could go near him, and the hunter who had brought him to camp was nearly killed on one occasion by the brute, which climbed up the tree after him. He only succeeded in saving himself by climbing across a branch too light to support the bulky bear and swinging himself into another tree.

Bear is Captivated.

Naturally Miss Normand, who had little experience with animals, but who nevertheless was to play the part of a bear tamer, doubled her ability to overcome the vicious tastes of Mr. Bear and to bring him to her way of thinking. She had to bring herself without visible sign of fear or trembling within range of the brute's jaws and claws. With a smile upon her lips, and the light of triumph in her eyes, while hunters stood a few yards away with loaded rifles in their hands ready to send a ball into the beast's brains at the first sign of attack, Miss Normand sauntered up to the bear, patted him assuringly upon his nose, pulled his ears, stroked him, put her arms around his neck, and finally succeeded in climbing upon his back without the bear showing signs of unrest.

Miss Norman[d] had on at the time a tight hobble skirt which had been overlooked in the preliminaries and her efforts to straddle the bear in this garment evoked peals of laughter. As soon as Miss Norman[d] ceased to pat the bear and retired to camp he was again the same vicious unruly brute as before.

Horse is Saved.

On still another occasion, Miss Normand was driving a number of horses down a steep place in the mountains near Mount Lowe. One of the horses fell into a crevasse and could not extricate himself. It fell upon Miss Normand to release the horse from his predicament, which she succeeded in doing only after much effort and ingenuity. This was not in any film, but when she was alone miles from home.

The nerve, resource and versatility of this young actress is shown by still another incident. In one of her films she was obliged to run an express train alone for a number of miles in order to save it from the attacks of a band of outlaws and bandits, who were at the time holding up all the trains, and had in fact, bound and gagged the engineer, and fireman some miles back. Unaided and with no previous experience of the mechanism of locomotives, Miss Normand succeeded in coaling, firing and driving the engine for a number of miles until help was reached.

Not long ago she was chosen comedy queen at a ball held at the Shrine Auditorium, Los Angeles. She had to come from Mexico for her purpose and had an exciting trip across the border assisted by Governor Carranza in person, who saw her safely across the dividing line between Mexico and the United States. Mayor Ralph of Los Angeles led the

procession with Mable [sic] Normand, there being hundreds of move actors and actresses from all over California present on the occasion.

Girl Formerly Model.

Before Miss Normand joined the Keystone company, of which she is now the star, she acted for one or two motion picture houses and raised quite a reputation for herself as an athletic and daring young actress. She has beauty and charm. For several years before she entered the motion picture business, she posed for a number of leading artists many of them still exhibit her portraits in one pose or another. Expert swimmer, horsewoman and all-around athlete as she is, she has enjoyed automobile driving and raced last year with several famous drivers, among them being Barney Oldfield and Teddy Tezlaff [Tetzlaff], whose car she drove on the big circular course when she won a spectacular race. She knows no fear, and would undertake any feat necessary in order to make a good film.

In private life Miss Normand is fond of reading and her animals, particularly her collie dog. Sewing, dress-making and kindred feminine interests she finds too slow. She has a keen sense of humor and no one enjoys a good joke better than she. In fact she is an all-around healthy, athletic young woman with a decided talent for acting and with a will of her own so strongly developed that at the age of 20, she has succeeded in heading and managing her own company of players—a thing never before attained in the history of the stage by any player, man or woman of her age.

* from *Lethbridge Daily Herald* [Alberta, Canada], February 19, 1914
[advertisement]

“Zu-Zu the Bandleader”
Made By
Keystone Film Company
2000 feet of Side-Splitting Humor
featuring the Inimitable and Well Known
Mabel Normand and
Ford Sterling

~*~

This picture shows the trial of a
popular band master. How he is
hounded by admiring females and
finally punished by the ad-
mirer of one of them. It is
full of screams, full of
action; All Keystone
comedies are good.
This is a winner.

* from *Reel life*, February 28, 1914

Miss Mabel Normand, of the Keystone Company, has just received through the courtesy of B. Allan, of the Western Import Co., Ltd., of London, a letter from Mr. A.W. Stewart, Chief Engineer of Existing Lines Office, Western Australia, Government Railways. Mr. Stewart is editor of the Western Australia Railways Gazette, in addition to his duties as Chief Engineer of the railroad company.

“We have all watched your career with great interest,” says Mr. Stewart, in his letter to Miss Normand, or, as she is known in Australia, Muriel Fortesque [also Fortescue] “There are several large motion-picture theatres in Perth, and practically the whole of the Railway service of the State of Western Australia, British Dominion, have watched your career during the last two years, all through your stay with the A. B. Co. [Biograph] and after your transfer to Keystone.

“There is one question which greatly vexes the whole of the service here, however. Will you kindly tell us the color of your eyes and hair? We should all like to have our curiosity on this respect satisfied.”

Miss Normand was much gratified at the expression of appreciation from Mr. Stewart, and the railway employees of Western Australia directed a letter to the Australian editor and her other admirers in the antipodes, conveying the information that her eyes and hair are both dark brown.

* from *Variety*, April 17, 1914

A salary war, in which Marie Dressler and Mabel Normand, known as “The Queen of the Movies,” are struggling for supremacy, was given light today with the announcement that Miss Dressler had left the stage for pictures. She is now a member of the Keystone company, of which Miss Normand has been leading lady for several years at a salary reported to be \$1,500 a week.

The storm broke out when Miss Dressler took possession of the star dressing room at the Keystone studio, which for the past two years has been sacred to Miss Normand. This precipitated such a riot a second stellar dressing room was hastily constructed in an effort to appease both temperamental females.¹³⁵

* from *Variety*, April 24, 1914

A truce has been declared in the temperamental war between Marie Dressler and Mabel Normand at the Keystone picture studio, but the stars are still nursing their “peeve” and refuse to speak.

* from *Sunday Times* (Perth, Australia), May 3, 1914

The Ladies Section-Perth Prattle

¹³⁵ This incident is partly alluded to by Minta Durfee in “Fatty’s First,” an article series that appeared in *Classic Images*, No. 70.

That susceptible poet—all poets are susceptible—Mr. A. W. Stewart, of the Railway Department, has fallen in love with the filmed presentment of Muriel Fortescue, the biograph [sic] star, and recently addressed impassioned verses to sweet Muriell:--

*The lights are low, the handles turn,
The while our hearts expectant burn,
In drama, farce or comedy,
One vision fair—or dark—to see.
(Forgive this qualifying phrase,
But oft behind the footlights blaze
Some secrets are concealed with care.)
We know not thus your shade of hair.
But ne'ertheless we love you well,
Blonde, dark, or fair, sweet Muriel.*

*This homage take from overseas,
From all the myriad hearts you please,
Enraptured by your art divine:
Who've seen you play in ev'ry line—
The flirting typists gay and bright,
Or Mrs. Scared "Suburbanite,"
Or water nymph, where breezes blow,
Or victim of Bombardio.
How well you played no tongue may tell,
Blonde, dark, or fair, sweet Muriel.*

*Muriel! Dark, or fair, or blonde,
Ten thousand beating hearts respond
As one held captive by your art,
When e'er you play the flirting part,
And pangs of anguish thrill them through
When villains dire your path pursue.
When "all ends well" their rapturous mood
(As truly melodrama should)
Proclaims they love you, wildly well,
Blonde, dark, or fair, sweet Muriel.*

In reply came this matter-of-fact missive from the lady, who lives in far away New York:--

"Dear Sir.—Your kind letter of December 30 has just come to hand, and I sincerely beg to thank you for the same. You somehow or other have my name wrong. I think the name of Fortescue is the name under which the Biograph Co. advertised me in Europe. The color of my eyes is brown, and some say my hair is brown while others say it is black, so I guess both are right. Under separate cover I am sending you two autographed photographs. Hoping you receive them in good condition.—I am your very truly,
Mable [sic] Normand."

So her name isn't Muriell at all, and she has brown eyes and brown-black hair, and she "sincerely begs to thank you for the same" in the style of a suburban storekeeper acknowledging the receipt of a bag of chaff. O tempora! O Stewart!

* from *Reel Life*, May 16, 1914

Mabel Normand of the Keystone Company is a world famous comedienne. Probably no American leading on the screen is better known or more popular in England, she dumbfounds staid British audiences by the vigor with which she plays her parts in the most rough and tumble comedies, while keeping that daintiness, that immaculate, spic-and-span appearance, which is one of her charms. All the "nuts" of the English picture houses are devoted to her.

She has made many conquests in Australia. Not long ago she received a letter from A. W. Stewart, Chief Engineer of the Exsting Lines Office, Western Australia Government Railways Gazette, in which he said that he and his colleagues had been following her career with greta interst for two years. Mr. Stewart, who is a writer of reputation in Australia, enclosed a poem which he had composed in her honor and requested her portrait to be given a conspicuous place in the Perth Institute Hall of Fame, In Australia Miss Normand is known by her stage name, Muriel Fortesque [sic]...

The Keystone comic films captivated the public from the start. They have a character all their own. Mr. Sennett's fertile brain bore one novel plot after another, each more fantastic, more excruciatingly funny, than the last. And Miss Normand – always original, full of clever inventions, new ideas of make-up and new stage business – collaborated with him to make the Keystone releases the most astonishing success in filmdom.

During the last six months this capable team has proved that the full-reel and even the multiple-reel comedy is not only perfectly possible to pictures, but that it is the very form of entertainment the public has long been waiting for. Miss Normand's name has become identified with the finest brand of comic subjects on the screen.

The demand for "Keystone Mabel" s increasing every day. Miss Normand's versatility and daring, her brilliant beauty and her wonderful gift for the humorous, make her one of the most fascinating actresses in pictures or the legitimate. Her power is due, in a large degree, to an extraordinary facility in facial expression. No matter how bizarre the character she may be called upon to impersonate, she is never at a loss to create a type.

Miss Normand radiates health and the love of living. She is brunette with dark brown eyes, with a figure that constant athletic exercise has trained to perfection. Every muscle is firm, and her movements are graceful and supple. She is joyously at home on horseback. She swims as though water were her native element.

Now the Keystone comedienne again finds herself playing opposite Mr. Sennett. Recently in response to urgent appeals from the public, the great comic artist has been appearing in his own productions. The first Keystone picture in which he and Miss Normand share leading honors is entitled, "I Should Worry." *The Biographer*.

* from *Gazette and Bulletin, Williamsport, Pa.*, June 5, 1914

Today's matinee and night the City theater offers for the first time in Williamsport a melodramatic story of a girl's fight for right, entitled "Thorns of the Gay White Way." The story depicted here is morally beneficial to all. It portrays a political boss who is a proprietor of a tenement dive. He is, however, large in heart and spirit and is ever the friend of the ill-treated girl. This City theater feature will arouse your sympathy for the struggling girls that are confronted with many traps of injustice. Conditions similar to the ones here portrayed are the existing ones in many of our large cities, conditions that baffle the civic authorities. "Caught in a Cabaret" is the title of a Keystone comedy that will also be presented today. This comedy was staged in Mack Sennett's comical factory out in California and undoubtedly will be the Keystone success of the year. This comedy caused so much laughter among actors and cameramen while being photographed that several attempts were made before getting a perfect negative. Mabel Normand and Mack Sennett score heavily in this two-reel comedy feature.

* from *Movie Pictorial*, June 13, 1914

The Rivals

Ever since the day when Marie Dressler gave up being a queen of the stage to become a Keystone comedienne, she and Mabel Normand, the Queen of the Movies, have been bitter rivals.

It began, they say, with dressing rooms. There is only one "first" dressing room, and while Mabel Normand ought to have it by right of priority of occupancy, on the other hand, Miss Dressler ought to have it by right of superiority of size. From dressing rooms it graduated--fostered and featured by all the local papers--to salaries: from salaries to maids; from maids to Pomeranians; and from Pomeranians to motor cars.

Everyone breathed easier. Here at last was something that might be settled. When it was rumored shortly afterward that Miss Normand and Miss Dressler had decided to demonstrate the merits of their respective cars--also their driving--by racing against each other at Ascot Park at Santa Monica, the various members of the company began drawing their salaries in advance to back their favorites.

The Day arrived. Miss Normand was there with her high power Bear Cat Stutz, while Miss Dressler drove a Fiat. Many fans were there but the weather made a postponement necessary.¹³⁶

* from *Blue Book Magazine*, July 1914

A Champion Swimmer Who Swims for Plays

A few months ago, a couple of New Yorkers were standing on a rustic bridge in a Los Angeles park, chatting of the California climate and other things, when a murmur of shouts in the distance made them to look back among the trees at the end of the bridge. In a moment, something white appeared. Coming nearer, it proved to be a running man, clothed merely in a white night shirt, as far as they could judge. As he sprang, howling, upon the bridge, they recoiled with horror - for around his neck was a wriggling knot of rattlesnakes. With a final screech he vaulted over the rustic hand-rail of the bridge into the water-and disappeared.

One of the New Yorkers started to peel off his coat to jump in after the unfortunate man when the voice of a woman, crying, echoed among the trees. In a moment, the woman appeared, ran out on the bridge, and without a second's hesitation, dived over the rail into the water after the man with the snakes. Again the New Yorker was about to dive after them when a drawling voice floated upward from behind a clump of bushes at the water's edge:

"Put your coat on, Mister...She'll have him out in no time - swims like a duck! (Great stuff Mabel!...We got the whole of it before the film ran out!)"

Then the bewildered New Yorkers saw the man and the woman swimming easily and with much laughter shoreward -- the knot of stuffed and very dead snakes in his hand. Running around to intercept the pair, the New Yorkers politely hoped they were all right -- and would have held them up with innumerable questions, but the young woman smilingly held up one dripping arm, pointed to the maid with a bath-robe and a rain coat in the approaching motor car and said:

"Too wet to say anything now. Come out to Alessandro Street this afternoon, if you're interested."

Now those two New Yorkers were unique among their species. They did not only not recognize the young woman at a glance, but even her name was unfamiliar to them when they confessed the astonishing fact that they had never seen more than two or three photo-plays in all their benighted lives.

To fifteen or twenty million people in the United States and Canada, however, both name and face are undoubtedly well known. For Mabel Normand is one of the most popular woman on the motion-picture stage, today -- and is recognized whenever she appears upon the screens. For some time, she was known as a Vitagraph and then a Biograph favorite. When the Keystone Company was formed, she was taken over with Mack Sennett, Fred Mace and Ford Sterling from the Biograph. Then Mack Sennett was made managing director of the company, in the Los Angeles studio, and began developing his idea of producing farce comedies without the aid of a scenario. Just how he gets his results by such methods is something of a mystery -- but he has made Keystone comedies known, and Mabel Normand goes with Keystone comedies, wherever you see them -- usually, with the ever-amusing "Fatty."

¹³⁶ Years later, writing in the thirties, Marie Dressler commented: "During the three months we worked together, I learned to love and respect Mabel Normand. She had courage; and courage, perhaps, is the quality I admire most. Many times I've known Mabel to run the risk of losing her job by disagreeing with her director on the way a certain bit should be played. 'Of course, I'll do as you want,' she would conclude, 'but I do not *feel* the character that way.'" *My Story* pp. 169-70.

Miss Normand is one of the swimming champions of the Pacific Coast, an expert horsewoman, athletic, and fond of all outdoor sports to a degree which permits of her being thrown or dragged about in some of the more strenuous comedy work in a way that would put most women in the hospital. And her pantomimic acting can only be described as something inimitable.

* from *Moving Picture World*, July 1, 1914

Mabel Normand, Key To Many Laughs In Keystone Comedies

"Deliver us, O Lord, from the woman who attempts comedy," is a prayer quite commonly uttered by those who sit in judgment on the performances of those who earn their livelihood by entertaining the public. The reviewer's contention is that if there has been granted the gentler sex the saving sense of humor the proof of it is not frequently given in the amusement field. In support of the contention it will be pointed out that the women of the stage who fun-making efforts are not pitiful to behold can almost be numbered on the fingers of one hand.

It is to the credit of the women, who have directed their attention to the photoplay within the past few years that among them are found numerous exceptions to the rule which these captious critics imply, and notable among these women is Miss Mabel Normand, regularly appearing in Keystone comedies and known wherever "the movies" thrive, whether it be in Nome, Alaska, or Cape Town, South Africa.

Miss Normand's initial appearance before the camera was as a member of the Vitagraph forces. Thence she went to the Biograph Company, where she was thrown into contact with Mack Sennett, than whom there is no more favorably known director of comedy pictures at the present time. In these two engagements it was clearly established that here, indeed, was a woman with a sense of humor, and when Mr. Sennett undertook the formation of the Keystone Company, Miss Normand was invited to fill the position of leading woman with the organization which has since become so justly popular with that large percentage of moving picture fans who crown comedy on the screen as king of all the styles of photoplay entertainment.

Soon after the establishment of the Keystone studios at Edendale, near Los Angeles, Cal., under the direction of Mr. Sennett, Miss Normand's development as a premier screen comedienne was begun.

The Keystone comedies captivated the public from the start for the reason that it once became apparent that they had a style and character all their own. Mr. Sennett's fertile brain created one novel plot after another, each more fantastic and excruciatingly funny than the last. And Miss Normand, always original and full of clever inventions in make-up and stage business, collaborated with him to make the releases the huge success they have proved to be.

In those early Keystone days, as now, Mr. Sennett and Miss Normand were supported by players selected with the greatest care with regard to their fitness for comedy work. Performances were of uniform excellence with high lights here and there, but "Keystone's Mabel's" extraordinary ability is attested by the fact that she easily outstripped all of her sisters in the company and became as great a screen favorite as some of the male members who have been recruited from the regular theatrical ranks after having established themselves as specialists in comedy.

Miss Normand's power is due, in large measure, to her extraordinary ability in facial expressions. It seems to make but little difference what kind of a character she is called upon to impersonate -- she is never at a loss to create a type. Her versatility and daring, her compelling type of beauty, and, most of all, her sympathetic understanding of what the average man or woman regards as humorous, have made Miss Normand one of the most fascinating of actresses, either in pictures or the legitimate stage. In private life she is just the energetic, enthusiastic, fun-loving girl that she typifies each time she appears on screen. She rides like a Centaur, swims like a fish, and, with muscles as strong and springy as cold-rolled steel, is well qualified to hold up her end in any of the Keystone stories, which are noted in their strenuous action. Some of her best work which Miss Normand has ever done has been opposite Mr. Sennett, and that she is destined to add greatly to her reputation is assured by the announcement made not long ago that Mr. Sennett himself is to resume his roles before the camera, serving both as director and actor.

That Mr. Sennett is to appear in comedy releases of his own direction is the result of a strong popular demand voiced by moving picture fans who remember his splendid work of other days. While Miss Normand's art is absolute, there has always seemed to exist between her and Mr. Sennett a more perfect artistic understanding than has ever been noticeable between her and any other playing associate. This perfect understanding makes for perfect pictures.

* from *Reel Life*, July 4, 1914

Mabel Normand, the strikingly beautiful Keystone comedienne, is a young woman who works with all her might and main, and is distinguished also by her capacity for making the finest sort of friends. Not long ago, Nina Wilcox Putnam--leader of the movement among American women to emancipate their sex from slavish imitation of Paris fashions and to form an independent wing who shall stand for originality in dress--became much interested in Miss Normand's work.

She invited Inez Haynes Gillmore, the writer, whose home is in San Francisco, to go with her to the Keystone studios to meet Miss Normand. There they had the good fortune to be allowed to witness a photo comedy play in production. It is seldom that Mack Sennett admits visitors to the stage. He made an exception, however, in the case of these two distinguished women, who had made the journey to Los Angeles out of sheer interest in the leading woman of his company.

Both were even more delighted with Miss Normand in real life than one the screen. They were astonished at the amount of slap-bank, rough and tumble action she was able to put into the piece, while still impressing one with the fact she is a young woman of natural dignity, refinement and charming manners. Their visit to the studios has resulted in a warm friendship between them and Miss Normand.

* from *Pictures and Picturegoer*, August 8, 1914

Myself--By The Sea-Side! A Seasonable Article Written Exclusively For This Journal

by Mabel Normand, The Famous Keystone Comedienne

I have been asked to write about myself, and also about the seaside. Fancy that! Well, it is really very nice of you to want me to write about myself and about my experiences in the land of films and cameras, but I really feel much more like the seaside at the moment. I feel like being lazy, too, and not writing anything about anything!

You see I am writing this on the sands. No; I won't tell you where, if you don't mind, because I'm having a very quiet holiday.

Yes, I am writing this on the sands, and it's difficult work, apart from the fact that I do not find it particularly easy to talk so much about myself -- I'd hate you to think me conceited, so you won't, will you? Apart from that, I am trying to keep the writing-pad on my knee, the sun from my eyes, and the sheets of paper from blowing away out to sea. No; it's not easy. A moment ago a sweet little boy in a blue striped bathing-costume came up and threw a spadeful of sand in my lap--all over this article it went! Such fun! I nearly gave up the idea of writing it in despair, and decided to spend the rest of the time in playing with the little boy. He's such a dear, and I haven't been introduced to him yet either! Still, that doesn't matter at the seaside, does it? I simply adore building sand-castles!

Still, my friends all over the world are all so very kind to me that I feel I must give just a little of my time to writing this, especially as the Editor asked for it so nicely.

But what shall I say about myself and about the sea-side? How shall I begin?

I shall be reduced to talking about the weather in a moment, I know I shall.

But even the weather would be a "brilliant" subject to discuss today. Do you note the pun?

You see, the sun is blazing down, the sky is of that tinge of blue that you can't look at without blinking your eyes, and the sea is--well, just divine!--sparkling and flashing all colours in the sunlight. I'm longing to throw myself in the waves and have a jolly good swim. I'm going to, too, when I've finished writing to you. After my swim I shall have a sun-bath--I love a sun-bath! Don't you?

By the way, talking about the sea--we were, weren't we?--and writing this on the edge of the sea, has just reminded me of an adventure I had IN the sea. It wasn't a particularly pleasant adventure either. Still, they tell me that all you dear picturegoers love to hear about players' experiences, so I'll tell you this one. Don't get bored now, will you? You promise?

First, you must know that I have won several prizes for swimming and high-diving at various aquatic exhibitions. I look a swimmer--or should it be -ist?--from the photograph I'm sending you, don't I? I had it taken on these very sands yesterday morning--well, as I was saying, luckily for me I really can take care of myself in the water. Even so, my friends, this fact did not prevent me having an unusually thrilling sea adventure whilst acting in a Keystone comedy that was called "Lizzie's Sacrifice." I shall never forget that title, for, although my name is not Lizzie (for which Heaven be praised), I was very nearly the "sacrifice" all right! Yes!

The play--one of the usual Keystone burlesques, of course, in which I played with Mr. Ford Sterling, who has, as you know, now left us--was really good fun. I DID enjoy myself, for I love the sea so much, until what I'm going to tell you about happened. ("Well, for goodness' sake, get on with in, Miss Normand.") Very well, don't get huffy. You can't expect me to write calmly and coldly on such a glorious morning, can you?--especially as I'm sitting here almost covered with sand and longing to be in the sea.

("Are you going to tell us this adventure or not, Miss Normand?")

My dear reader, if I promise faithfully that I WILL tell it, will you shut--I should say, will you keep quiet?

("It's all very well, but--")

I know it's all very well, and look what a lot of type you're wasting arguing like this!

Now in "Lizzie's Sacrifice" I was the heroine, and I was always being persecuted unmercifully by the great ugly villain, who carried a horrid revolver and wore a perfectly ridiculous little black beard. Of course, my real lover made gallant efforts to save me all this time. But I couldn't get away from that obnoxious villain with his nasty-smelling cigar.

One day I was supposed to have wandered down to the sea-shore at a lonely spot, rapt, enraptured, and wrapt in meditations maidenly--you know, like a penny novelette heroine. But the rapt raptures in which I was enwrapped were rudely dispelled by the sudden advent of the ugly villain, who had followed me down to the lonely sea-shore. (Aren't we getting on with this story nicely?)

Once more he pleaded his love with bended knee on the wetness of the sands. Once again I spurned him--you know, in the usual way that heroines spurn villains. Then he voiced a VEARFUL [sic] vengeance! He cried to the camera that he would tie me fast to a rock, and watch the tide creeping slowly up, up, up, up (you know how tides creep) until it smothered me and I was drowned--killed by a horrible drown! I pleaded, I prayed, I swore (in a ladylike way), but still my pleadings were of no avail. He was adamant--and several other things as well. So at last tied he hauled me down to the rock and tied me there with ropes--thick r-ropes in r-revenge! And with the tying of the ropes the scene was ended, the camera stopped clicking, and we all went to lunch. I sat next to the villain.

At high tide we all went down to the rock again, and, getting into a boat, I was rowed out and again tied to the rock. Then the camera started again, and all the time the big waves were dashing over me. I was blinded by them, and could scarcely breathe. Whenever I tried to draw breath I was choked with more than a mouthful of nasty salt sea-water. (Note for young students: Sea-water is salt, and is not good to drink.)

I had only a bathing-costume on under my thin summer frock, and I soon began to feel jolly cold--also wet. But the scene had to be taken, and the villain gloated until the hero and the Keystone police rushed up and struggled with him. All this time, remember, the sea had been dashing over my head, and the waves were getting bigger and bigger, until I was off my feet and only held upright by the ropes round my waist and arms.

Suddenly, without so much as an apology, a huge wave lashed the rock and me with awful force, and to my horror I found myself being swept away in the backwash. The ropes had broken--all but the one that bound my arms! I was practically helpless in the rough sea. I struck out desperately with my feet, and then a big wave picked me up and I was dashed back against the rock and lost consciousness. When I came to my senses I was lying on the sand surrounded by my anxious fellow-players, and they were trying to get me to swallow brandy. My head and body were covered with cuts and nasty bruises. If they hadn't dragged me in just when they did, I should have been washed back by the next wave and drowned without a doubt.

So, you see, even our screaming comedies have their dangers. Although I joke about it now, it wasn't very funny when it happened, believe me.

Now, having, as I promised, related that adventure, I'll say good-bye (in this article, at least), and wish you all as jolly a holiday as I'm having. I'm just going to collect all these scattered pages, put them in an envelope addressed to the Editor (with a little letter I've written to him), and send the whole lot to the post, and then--well, my

friends, then I'm going to get into the costume you see me wearing in the portrait and have a ripping swim. After that-to lunch.

MABEL NORMAND.

* from *Motion Picture News*, August 15, 1914

Miss Mabel Normand, of the Keystone companies, is learning aviation from Walter Brookin, the permanent Keystone aviator, and has made three flights alone, driving the machine herself. Miss Normand hopes to soon be able to do the loop, when a motion picture will be made.

* from *Motion Picture News*, August 15, 1914

Despite an article that recently appeared that Miss Mabel Normand, the Keystone comedy star, was married off to the director general of that company without her knowledge or consent, Miss Normand wishes to emphatically state that not a wedding bell in the whole city of Los Angeles or any other city ever struck a note in her behalf.

* from *Variety*, August 28, 1914

Mabel Normand has purchased a Cyclecar and has painted her name in big red letters all over it.

* from *Motography*, August 29, 1914

During the absence of Thomas Ince and Mack Sennett, Reginald Barker has been in charge of the Kay Bee, Broncho and Domino Companies and Roscoe Arbuckle and Mabel Normand have been directing the Keystone players.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, September 3, 1914

Mabel Normand, Keystone star, won the first prize for best waltzer of the hesitation variety at the Vernon Country Club last week.

* from *Motion Picture News*, September 5, 1914

Not content with an aeroplane and a Mercer racer, Mabel Normand has entered the amateur field, having purchased the seven horsepower cyclecar made by Shirley Williams, age 16 years, with which he won third place in the Vanderbilt, Jr., races at Ascot Park, Los Angeles, July 4th, making the fifty miles in one hour and six minutes. The cyclecar has a speed of fifty-five miles an hour.

Miss Normand has had the little racer finished in an elegant manner at one of the local garages, and for the next two months the young driver and maker of the car will use it, in giving exhibition mile runs at fairs and amateur race meets, the largest one he will attend being that at Tacoma, Wash., on Labor Day, when there will be a purse of \$750 and three cups for the two fifty-mile races.

[A photo of Mabel Normand in her racer can be seen in the *Motion Picture News*, Sept. 12, 1914, page 58.]

* from *Pictures and Picturegoer*, September 12, 1914

Mabel Normand, of the Keystone, is learning aviation from Walter Brookin, the permanent Keystone aviator, and has made three flights alone, driving the machine herself. Miss Normand hopes to soon be able to do the loop, when a motion picture will be made.

* from *Motion Picture News*, September 19, 1914

Poor little Mabel Normand wants to take a trip "back home" to New York, she confided to us one Saturday afternoon. "I've been out here ever since the Keystone started, and they won't let me go at all," she says, and that is two years ago. Mabel is busy directing her own company and is putting on some real good comedy.

* *Moving Picture World*, September 26, 1914

Our friend Mabel, her last name is too well known, won a loving cup at the Vernon country club dansant last week. She is quite a dancer of the late[est?] steps, and is a popular young lady when it comes to terpsichorean execution.

* from *Motography*, October 24, 1914

An All-Star Keystone

Mabel Normand, Fatty Arbuckle, Charles Chaplin, Mack Sennett and all the other famous Keystone players in one picture! The picture, directed by Mack Sennett! One of the funniest things that ever has been seen on the screen! This is what is promised in "The Sea Nymphs," the first of the special two-a-month two-reel Keystone-Mutual comedies. It will be released in about a month. The picture was made at Santa Catalina Island, and it combines all the funny effects of the Mabel series and the other Keystone pictures. But it goes farther than that, because it has some brand new ideas in it. Those who have been privileged to see it say that it is the greatest scream of that brand. Patrons of the Keystone-Mutual pictures will know what this means. The play revolves around the escape of Mabel Normand and Fatty Arbuckle with "Big Ben," Miss Normand's pet seal.

* *Moving Picture World*, October 31, 1914

"Keystone Mabel" Normand, the renowned Keystone comedian, has been spending her vacation in New York and, needless to say, she is having the time of her young life. Being well-known in New York, previous to her going to the Coast where she has been for two and a half years, all her old friends have been waiting for this vacation and she has been wined and dined incessantly.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 9, 1914

The Photoplayers held their first annual gambol at the Mason Friday and Saturday nights, and there was a collection of stars and near-stars, behind and before the footlights, that would have made the most blasé press agent weep for joy.

Everybody in filmland was there, and the lobby was a veritable florist shop, while eager men sought to buy candy, flowers and programmes from the host of leading ladies and ingénues that seemed nearly unable to supply the demand. Film heroes and heroines stepped from the portrait frames with a cordiality that gave the whole affair an informal touch and made it such a splendid success. Miss Laura Oakley, Chief of Police of Universal City, kept the enormous crowd moving in the already packed theatre.

The audience was nearly as interesting as the show itself. It included Isadore Bernstein, Mayor of Universal City; Mabel Van Buren, Beatrice Van, Vera Sisson, Anna Little, Dorothy Davenport,¹³⁷ Bessie Eyton, Edith Johnson, Elsie Greeson, Enid Markey, Leona Hutton, Stella Razeto, the Gish sisters, Cleo Madison, Grace Cunard, Mabel Normand, Carlyle Blackwell, Billy Stowell, George Periolot, Donald Crisp, Bobby Harron, William Clifford, Herbert Rawlinson, James Singleton, Wallace Reid, J. Warren Kerrigan, Harry Carter, Tom Mix, Sidney Smith, Cortenay Foote and D. W. Griffith. There were many others in evening dress making the rounds of the boxes greeting friends and admirers.

Tom Wilson opened the song programme with original parodies that held the audience from the start. His appearance in blackface was a disappointment, as every one wanted to see him as he appeared on the screen.

In excellent voice and with a choice collection of semi-classical songs, Myrtle Stedman of Bosworth, Inc., earned the plaudits of the audience.

Then came Ben Deeley with his famous "Good Old Common Sense" song, and scored a hit. He was called to give an encore, and sang his latest popular success, "My Heart's Way Out in California," which he put over in a fashion that finally forced him to make a short speech, which was a gem in itself.

"Discovered," a short sketch, featuring Kathlyn Williams and a group of Selig Players, was replete with tense situations, and the comedy climax surprised and delighted every one. Miss Williams was ably assisted by Guy Oliver, Wheeler Oakman, Charles Clary, and Jack McDonald. The act was superb, every one scored a personal success. Mr. Clary, as the friend, and Mr. Oakman, as the husband, were especially good, easily maintaining their reputations behind the footlights that they have gained before the camera.

Max Asher with a patter act assisted by a pack of cards, showed a dexterity with the pasteboards that won him instant favor. In faultless evening clothes and grand opera voice, Wm. Worthington rendered operatic selections to good advantage.

George Cohan's first sketch, with its laughable lines, was offered with great success by Filson & Errol, who gave it the first production, and from the way the house enjoyed it proved that it has not outgrown popularity. "The Tip on the Derby" was very good.

After the intermission Ruth Roland, assisted by Harry McCoy¹³⁸ at the piano, proceeded to stop the show, the audience not being satisfied till the supes brought the piano back and the pair sang another song. Miss Roland left nothing to be desired either in her singing or her gowns, and the patter of the act brought one continuous roar of laughter.

Charley Murray, of Murray & Mack, offered a monologue up to his usual standard, and was given a big hand.

"The Sheriff of the Shasta," that Theodore Roberts made famous, was offered with a cast that made the sketch far superior to its presentation in vaudeville. Mr. Roberts is always good and, as the sheriff, he was a delight. Miss Smythe, the only one of the original case, was equal to bearing the only female role of the piece, and her scenes with Mr. Roberts were in her usual inimitable manner. Murdock McQuarrie, as the jealous husband, and Hobart Bosworth, as the acrobat, played these parts as only such actors of sterling quality are able.

Lydia Yeamans Titus, with songs and character studies, fully contributed to the enjoyment of the affair.

The Oz Film Company presented Violet McMillan, Frank Moore and Fred Woodward. Miss McMillan has often been compared to a doll and, as she dances like a sprite, her success was always assured. Woodward and Moore were great, and "Hank" is a favorite wherever he goes. This trio presented one of the cleverest acts on the programme, while one of the best dancing teams in vaudeville closed a show that will be always be remembered and a credit to the photo-players.

* from *Motography*, November 14, 1914

A Six-Reel Keystone Comedy

Reviewed by Charles R. Condon

Up to the present time multiple reel comedies of three reels or more have been more or less experiments, and, in the majority of cases, absolute failures as far as preserving purely comedy situations and atmosphere is concerned. In order to sustain interest and continuity, and prevent the picture's becoming a mere jumble of funny complications it has been generally been found necessary to sacrifice humor, in places, to allow the plot to be seen and felt.

In view of the tremendous success which the New York Motion Picture Corporation has made of its six-reel Keystone comedy, "Tillie's Punctured Romance," it marks an epoch in this most popular department of photoplay. It is the "Cabiria" of comedy. Genuine humor is the dominating note in every scene, and its effect on the spectator

¹³⁷ Daughter of Keystone actress, Alice Davenport, and also later wife of Wallace Reid.

¹³⁸ As well as being one of the main Keystone players, McCoy was also an accomplished song writer. In addition, he was later a film director, and at the time of his death, Sept. 1, 1937 (at 43 years of age), was a casting director for the Walt Disney studio. His obituary of Sept. 2, 1937 in the *L.A. Examiner* reads: "After portraying comedy roles for many years, Mr. McCoy turned to song writing and directing for major Hollywood studios. He composed 'Pagan Love Song' and many other hits. "When Eva Tanguay was a vaudeville headliner, McCoy wrote songs for her. From 1924 to 1927 he wrote all the music for Mack Sennett productions. Later he was adirector for First National and Columbia studios. Three months ago, after winning success as a radio commentator, he joined the Disney Studio."

ranges from giggles and snickers to paroxysms of laughter, according to the length of the scene. Viewing a picture of this kind is true recreation. One becomes so absorbed in it that, for the time being, everything fades from his mind except the fact that Marie Dressler, Mabel Normand, and Charles Chaplin are enmeshed in a ludicrous tangle and are becoming funnier with each reel. The picture is being released on a state-rights basis.

The plot is a substantial one, and if emphasized would become a good comedy-drama, but in its treatment here it merely furnishes a background for individual action, a frame-work upon which the members of the cast, hang innumerable laugh-provoking mannerisms and carelessly accomplished, but exceedingly clever, feats.

The picture is typically Keystone, which fact in itself speaks for its quick action and cyclonic developments, and was produced by Mack Sennett without a scenario being made on it. Marie Dressler, universally known as Tillie, is featured and re-enacts on the screen the droll expressions and queer actions which made her famous on the stage in "Tillie's Nightmare." She is supported by the well-known Keystone pair, Mabel Normand and Charles Chaplin. To the latter falls the greater part of the action, and there is probably no one on the screen better able to give it a comedy twist than this inimitable comedian.

* from *Motography*, November 28, 1914

[The] *Sea Nymphs* -- Keystone (Two Reels) November 23, -- Fatty neglects his wife, and even his mother-in-law, when he spies the attractive Mabel. The girl's father takes a dislike to her stout friend, and introduces Ambrose into the love race. Fatty manages to have his mother-in-law and Ambrose locked in a dressing-room while he and Mabel give a diving exhibition. Mabel's father enlists the muscles of Ambrose, and together they attack Fatty but without making any impression on him. Had the angry parent been wise he would have sought the aid of Fatty's wife and her mother who grow impatient at his flirtation, and demonstrate to the crowd how big men should be whipped.

* from *Motography*, November 31, 1914

The Cinema Camera Club made of its invitation party dance on the night of October 10 a well-managed and pleasant affair. Pabst Coliseum, where the dancing party was held, was gayly decorated in tissue paper streamers of many colors and the lights turned up on the dancers were of many hues...There was a grand march which began at midnight, and had as its head Clara Kimball Young and the new president of the Screen Club, James D. Kirkwood...In her hand Miss Young held a Chinese lantern in which a candle gleamed during the march-figures in which other lights were momentarily extinguished. Mabel Normand, on from the west on her eastern rest-trip, was one of the marchers and there were many others of screen note, among whom were Edward Earl,...Alec Francis,...Jack Pickford,...Mary Pickford enjoyed the march from the Famous Players box and afterward joined the dancers. Adam Kessel and C. O. Baumann were in attendance, as also were Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Zukor....

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, December, 1914

Mabel Normand, known as Keystone Mabel, has dropped everything at the New York Motion Picture Company plant to come East...

(she) is enjoying a short vacation in New York, it is her first visit to the metropolis in two years.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, December 6, 1914

At a big Thanksgiving dance held at Venice, Barney Sherry, of Inceville, and Mabel Normand, of the Keystone, led the grand march. It was a great evening and a number of motion picture stars were present.

*from *Moving Picture World*, December 19, 1914

The first annual ball to be given under the auspices of the Screen Club of San Francisco took place on Saturday, November 28, at the Coliseum, 200 Baker street. The Screen Club was organized on October 19 of the present year and the holding of such a successful ball so shortly after its formation is not only an evidence of the desires of its members to make it a success, but of their energy and ability to work in harmony, as well, Sid Grauman, president of the club and one of its organizers, was chairman of the floor committee and also head of the reception committee, and stood at the main entrance during the first part of the evening welcoming the distinguished guests, of which there were a large number. Some idea of the size of the assemblage may be judged from the fact that approximately six thousand tickets were sold at the door, in addition to many that were sold at the box office of the theaters and by various exchanges. It is estimated that the total attendance was between eight and nine thousand persons. The regular reception committee consisted of sixty members of the club, while twenty of the leading city and state officials made up the honorary reception committee.

The grand march was scheduled to start at nine o'clock and it was just a few minutes after this hour when the march, led by Mayor and Mrs. James Rolph, Jr., commenced its circuit of the immense hall. Following the leaders were a galaxy of moving picture stars brought from the studios around the Bay and from the southern part of the State, together with the officials of the club. By this time the crowd had become so dense that it was impossible to keep it from encroaching on the floor, and the grand march became a triumphal procession through a populace anxious to catch a glimpse of their screen favorites in person. When the floor was partly cleared dancing was indulged in, the numbers being interspersed with singing, the enactment of moving picture roles and feature acts from downtown theaters.

An event of the evening was a short address by Mayor James Rolph, Jr., from the balcony of the hall. He pronounced the ball the greatest event of its kind in the history of the city and declared that it eclipsed anything he had ever seen in the line of a hall gathering. He said: "The moving picture business is here to stay, and the immense interest that is taken in screen productions can be judged by this assemblage. Much credit is due the Screen Club for the unqualified success of this event and I wish to thank it for bringing so many player folks here that we might meet them personally." He then read a list of those present and these were brought to the front of the balcony and introduced, amid great enthusiasm. Among those who were presented were: Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand and Charles Chaplin, of the Keystone, Mr. and Mrs. Victor Potel, Harry H. Todd, Margaret Joslin Todd, Evelyn Selbie, Ernest Van Pelt and wife, of the Western Essanay Company, Max Asher, of the Universal; Lee Willard, True Boardman, Fritz Wintermeier, Lila McClemon and Miss Ruth Hedington. Ford Sterling planned to be present

but was taken ill with pneumonia and could not come. Lillian [Dorothy] Gish was injured in an automobile accident and was compelled to send regrets. Another star who was prevented from attending through an accident was Margaret Clayton, of the Western Essanay Company, one of the first to respond to the invitation of the Screen Club. She recently suffered a fractured leg in a stage accident.

The attendance at the ball steadily increased until midnight, and tickets were sold as late as two o'clock. The Screen Club expects to net a neat profit from the affair and this money is to be expended in fitting up the club rooms in some convenient location in the downtown district. A portion of the funds secured is to be donated to the Associated Charities.

The remarkable success of the monster ball, as it is now known, was due in a large measure to the great publicity that was given it. For weeks before the event it was advertised in all the moving picture houses by means of attractive slides, the fact being emphasized that the leading players were to be present in person. Billboard advertising was used extensively and a real old-time circus stunt was used during the week preceding the event, this being the handing of colored banners on the span wires of the downtown trolley system.

A very attractive program of fifty-six pages was distributed, but, owing to the unlooked for attendance, this was given only to the fair sex and was much in demand. This contained pictures of the officers of the Screen Club and of some of the leading actors and actresses in the moving picture profession. It was well filled with announcements from Western producers, exchanges and the local theaters. An interesting feature was the dance program, consisting of fifty-five numbers, each of which bore some distinctive name of general interest. A few of these selected at random were: Keystone Rag, Sterling Two-Step, Chaplin Three-Step, Dorothy Gish Dip, Bronco Billy Gallop, Arbuckle Walk, Slippery Slim Two-Step, General Hesitation, Tivoli Three-Step, Dahnken Glide, Mary Pickford Waltz, Kleine Two-Step, Bunny Hug, Crone Rag, Lesser Two-Step and Kohn Lane Duck...

* from *Picture & Picturegoer*, December 26, 1914

Mabel Normand --"Keystone Mabel"-- whose portrait appears on our cover, recently acquired a racing motor-car. As might be expected, this clever comedienne put as much ginger in managing her car as she does into her funmaking before the camera. To keep a moderate pace in anything she does is a temperamental impossibility for Miss Normand, and it is rumored that she finds it a constant strain upon both her patience and amiability to stay within the speed limit. When she gets out beyond Los Angeles it is--Open up and go. Though she has confided in no one, her friends at the studio all suspect that Miss Normand is getting to training for the next road race at Santa Monica.

1915

* from *Reno Evening Gazette*, Monday, March 15, 1915

Mabel Normand, vivacious comedienne with the Keystone Moving Picture company, is an ardent boxing fan, one of the many women of the West who take a deep interest in the events of fistiana and its heroes.

A sportswoman through and through, this plucky film star admits she'd rather witness a clean-cut sparring exhibition than hear Caruso sing, for instance.

"Of course, I can't see many bouts," Mabel explained, "but recently we had one of the cleverest boxers in our studio here in the person of Frankie Dolan. I just doted on him while he was in training. And I certainly felt disappointed when Frankie left the company's employ."

Dolan participated in many four-round amateur bouts here and in San Francisco. When Charlie Chaplin left the Keystone service he took Dolan with him.

In addition to her interest in boxing and boxers, Miss Normand is an experienced horsewoman, loves automobile racing and owns three cars.

* from *Photo-Play Review*, March 23, 1915

The Lady on the Cover

Miss Mabel Normand, the charming leading lady of the Keystone Film Company, is considered one of the most beautiful as well as capable artists on screen.

Before her present connection with the Keystone Company, Miss Normand was well and favorably known as a clever performer, both with the Vitagraph and later with the Biograph Company. Her work with these two organizations attracted considerable attention and praise, and when the keystone Film Company was formed, Miss Normand was taken over, together with Mack Sennett, Fred Mace and Ford Sterling. This famous company of funmakers made an enviable reputation for themselves while with the Biograph Company, and the Keystone Company is to be complimented on their business in securing these prominent players.

Miss Normand, besides her personal charm and beauty, has an original style all her own while working in pictures, and in the particular style of comedy which the above company is now making a specialty of, Miss Normand has attracted attention by her work from the photo-play fans all over the country.

She is an accomplished horsewoman and a champion swimmer and high diver, and before entering picture work was recognized as one of the best women swimmers in the world. She is athletic to a degree and fond of outdoor sports of all kinds, in many of which she excels her male competitors.

Miss Normand is at present directing all the comedies in which she works. She is reputed to be the only actress-director in the country today.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, April 1915

The Great Cast (contest) -- Standing of the Leading Players up to Feb. 13

1. Leading Man, Earle Williams...346,300 (votes)
2. Leading Woman, Mary Pickford...333,205
3. Old Gentleman, W. Chrystie Miller...438,915

4. Old Lady, Mary Maurice...660,180
5. Character Man, Harry Morey...146,080
6. Character Woman, Julia S. Gordon
7. Comedian (Male), Charles Chaplin...464,585
8. Comedian (Female) Mabel Normand...457,945
9. Handsome Young Man, Warren Kerrigan...207,265
10. Beautiful Young Woman, Anita Stewart...285,940
11. Villain, Jack Richardson...327,230
12. Child, Helen(e) Costello...408,650

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, April 1915

Letters to the editor:

E.Z. Mark.--Mabel Normand in "The Knockout"(Keystone). Your letter has been referred to our clearing house.¹³⁹

P.F. Leahy, 325 Sutter Street, San Francisco, sends us a candid criticism and continues some of our interesting discussions....

...[in a lengthy letter, the writer, after commenting on various film companies, reaches to consideration of Keystone]...

...And where do the people come from who will laugh at the absolutely humorless capers of Mabel Normand, Roscoe Arbuckle and the rest of the Keystone Company? I will have to admit that Charles Chaplin is amusing at times, but the remainder of the company is in my opinion away below par. Even Mack Sennett, who used to be so funny in the old Biographs, has either lost his art or else is playing inferior scenarios. I understand that he is directing too, and cannot say that I appreciate his style in the least. There are many who agree with me, tho [sic] I regret to say that we are in the minority, at least in most audiences...

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, April 1915

Musings of "The Photoplay Philosopher"

The readers of this magazine have been locking horns on the merits of the Keystone comedies and their many imitators, and I have been asked to express an opinion. If memory serves me well, this class of comedy was introduced by the Biograph Company, a few years ago, at the time when Messrs. Fred Mace and Mack Sennett were with that company. Later, these Photoplayers left that company and went to the Pacific Coast, and either one or the other, or both, began to produce a similar style of comedy which afterwards became identified with and known as "slapstick" or Keystone comedy. It must also be admitted that, for this style of screen humor, the Keystone Company has many imitators and no equals. As these comedies gradually gained international popularity, nearly all the other companies began to copy them, and some with commendable success, adding various deviations of an original nature. And there is no gainsaying the fact that these comedies, whether Keystone or otherwise, are immensely popular to this day, and doubtless will continue to be so for some time to come. The latest and most pretentious photoplay of this class of work is "Tillie's Punctured Romance," with Marie Dressler and Charles Chaplin, which was ably directed by Mr. Sennett. This farce was admirably done, perhaps overdone. The familiar Keystone hallmarks, such as the throwing of pies into people's faces and the kicking and throwing of persons into every ludicrous position conceivable, were predominant thruout [sic], and these items never failed to raise a laugh from the average audience. The "flash" and the "cut back" are also made good use of in this comedy, as when one person pushes another, and we are then suddenly shown the next scene where the pushed person lands into a crowd of policemen or other bystander and knocks them into a heap or into the water. Another feature of these comedies is the frequent, imaginary injuring of the characters by such means as causing a heavy stone to fall on a person's toes, or being struck on the head with a brick. It is not clear why people are amused at the misfortunes or mishaps of others, but the fact remains that these catastrophes never fail to arouse a laugh. Again, these mirth foundries usually have one or more grotesque characters in them, such as we could never see in real life; and these curious persons are often made the husbands or the loves of unusually charming girls.

Some time ago the Vitagraph Company announced that they would not accept any scenario that introduced situations or characters that could not exist and be seen in real life, and this gave that company the idea of calling their productions "Life Portrayals." A most excellent policy was this, in my judgment, but it has not been strictly adhered to. Some of their recent comedies have possessed all the elements of the standard Keystone comedies.

There are several angles or standpoints from which we can view this class of comedy. First, we may inquire, Do they amuse a majority of photoplay patrons, or enough of them to warrant their continuance? Second, Do they do the Motion Picture business good or harm? Third, Is their influence for good or for evil? Fourth, Do they help to place the industry on that most high plane which we all hope for it, and to raise the standard, or do they hinder?

Let me take your minds back to the old days when the Punch and Judy shows were so popular. These were primarily intended for children, it is true, but even we older folk use to enjoy them. Next, let me take you back to the circus of our boyhood days and recall to your minds the well-remembered clown. Next, let me call your attention to the more modern form of entertainment known as vaudeville, on every program of which we have the Irish team, or the German team, who delight their audiences with what is commonly called "horseplay" and with a rapid-fire of indifferent jokes. Now, we never ask ourselves, when viewing these antics of clown or vaudeville performer, "Is it natural -- is it true to life?" We see life exaggerated in them. We see only a slight resemblance to real life. Everything is grotesque. It amuses and entertains because it is something different. It brings the laugh, and anything that promotes laughter is usually a good thing. As is well known, it is easier to make a child laugh than a grown-up. A child will laugh and be amused with a toy jumping-jack; so will an idiot. A child loves the grotesque antics of the circus clown,

¹³⁹ Apparently meaning that theirs is one of many other such letters praising that particular film.

and so do some of the most intellectual of us older people. All children enjoy the Keystone type of comedy. Whether it is elevating to them or harmful, is another matter. And I have carefully noted the effect of these comedies on various assemblages of older people. Invariably they arouse laughter. While it is true that a dozen people in a large audience can make a great deal of noise and commotion, giving the impression that the number is much larger than it really is, the fact is indisputable that a fair majority of people take kindly to this class of comedy. But I wonder how many of these laughers would enjoy Shaw's "Pygmalion," Wilde's "Lady Windemere's Fan," Sheridan's "School for Scandal," "Rivals," Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer," etc. How many of these would appreciate the fine, delicious wit of Swift, Thackeray, Stern, Addison, Steele, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Washington Irving, and all the great humorists whose art has survived the rust of time? There are two ways of arousing our risibilities: with a clumsy butcher's axe and with the keen blade of a stiletto as it were. The funny sheets of the Sunday newspapers is one form of wit, and the plays and works just mentioned are another. I wish to make it clear that I do not mean that he who enjoys a Keystone comedy is either a child or an idiot, and that it does not necessarily follow that he is deficient in intellect. Some of the greatest men who ever lived have had a penchant for the light, the ludicrous and frivolous. The circus clown often pleases the philosopher as well as he does the small boy who can neither read nor write. At the same time, it must be admitted that it is a low form of humor, and that its strongest appeal is to the lower order of the intellect. Not that it does not also appeal to the highest, in some cases, but that it is not made to appeal to that kind. One person enjoys the opera, another prefers ragtime music rendered by a street band or hand-organ. One person prefers the five-cent novel, another prefers Macaulay, Addison and Washington Irving. One person prefers the circus clown, another prefers John Drew in "A Scrap of Paper" or in "The Taming of the Shrew." There is no accounting for people's taste. Perhaps it is not for me, nor for anybody else, to say that he who enjoys Keystone comedies is deficient in the higher intellectual attainments, but the fact remains that there are degrees of quality in tobacco, in wines and in paintings, altho [sic] not all of us are able to detect the difference between the good and the poor ones.

I would conclude, therefore, that while the "slapstick" comedy has its place and its mission, it will never do the Motion Picture Business any good. We have altogether too many of them. They are absolutely repulsive and obnoxious to some persons, and they are merely a repetition of the old stage burlesque shows that have long since been relegated to the low-class theaters. We certainly can envy those who are able to laugh and enjoy themselves on such slight provocation, but we might hope for them that they could be educated up to that standard of intelligence where they could appreciate the higher flights of fancy as well. All education adds to our culture and refinement, and as we advance intellectually we get more enjoyment out of life. The lower animals are content when they have food and shelter, and their pleasures are limited. As we ascend the scale of intelligence, the sphere of enjoyment expands and widens. The more intelligence, the greater our discernment and capacity for enjoyment.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, April 1, 1915

Wedding Bells Ringing For Favorite of Films?

By Grace Kingsley

Bert Levey and Mabel Normand married secretly in San Francisco! There's a rumor on the Rialto that's pretty nearly a noise to this effect.

The story is that there has been a growing romance between the pair, which culminated in a wedding the day before yesterday in the Bay City. The story comes as a complete surprise to the many friends of both.

It is further reported that Miss Normand will desert the films for the fireside.

Mr. Levey is the manager of a big block of vaudeville houses in the West, as everybody knows, and although less than 25 years of age, he has made a big success of his business.

Miss Normand is one of the best known and most popular film actresses in the country, and her lovely face and figure have long adorned the Keystone comedy films for the New York Motion Picture Corporation. Miss Normand has been appearing in a large feature film for the Keystone, and it was ostensibly for this purpose of doing some scenes in this screen play that she went to San Francisco last Saturday.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, April 9, 1915

Mabel Normand, "Queen of the Movies," left last Saturday for San Francisco, where she will play the leading role in several Keystone pictures. With Miss Normand were Adam Kessel, Jr., President of the Keystone Film Company and the following members of the company which will support Miss Normand in the releases made in the Exposition City: Roscoe Arbuckle, Alice Davenport, Joe Bordeaux, Glen Cavender, Billy Gilbert, Eddie Kennedy and James Leslie. Mr. Kessel returned to Los Angeles on Monday.

* from *Oakland Tribune*, April 14, 1915 [advertisement]

Did You Ever See 'Em
?MAKING MOVIES?

The Tribune

Invites You To Witness

Keystone Comedy Stars

Before The Camera Man

At Idora Park¹⁴⁰

The Tribune has purchased tickets for the patrons to see

"Fatty" Arbuckle Mabel Normand

and other Keystone favorites being photographed in filming new
scenarios at the amusement park every afternoon...

Get Your Ticket Today – See How the Laughs Are Made...

¹⁴⁰ In Oakland, California; with the movie shot their being *Mabel's Wilful Way* (1915).

* from *Lancaster Daily Eagle* [Pennsylvania], April 16, 1915

TODAY

**Read What the Critic of the Motion Picture News Says
“That Little Band of Gold”**

Keystone-Mutual – Two reels – Reviewed by Peter Milne.

Mack Sennett, director-in-chief of the Keystone comedy has produced in “That Little Band of Gold,” a comedy that will cause any house to rock with laughter over the entire two thousand feet of the picture. This, you will say, is nothing unusual in Keystone comedies, but some persons have been speaking harshly of recent Keystones because they contend there are some things in them which should be left out, but not even the most staid and prim old maid in the neighborhood will find anything offensive in these two reels of fun.

The famous team, Roscoe Arbuckle and Mabel Normand, appears first as lovers then as man and wife, then as divorcees, then as lovers and lastly as man and wife again.. But, there is another gentlemen who appears who is equally as important as these, a gentleman who will receive a warm welcome. He is no other than our won Ford Sterling, back again going stronger than ever,

Most of the fun takes place in an opera house, where bibulous Fatty has taken Mabel, his wife and his mother-in-law on whom he looks with growing disfavor. In an opposite box are friend Ford, a belle, who is recipient of his great admiration, and another who has the odious role of chaperone.

Well Fatty makes his escape, robs Ford of his belle, leaving him the chaperone and all four repair to a cabaret. Ford is jealous, so he calls Mabel to the phone, with the result that a divorce follows, but Fatty and Mabel fall in love all over again and soon after get married.

A mere outline of the plot comes far from doing the picture anything like its deserved amount of justice, for the laughs will result from the clever actions of the players, all of whom are capable comedians. Both Fatty and Ford are acknowledged masters of facial expressions. What is more it is of their own manufacture, for their facial contortions are inimitable as attempted imitations have proven.

“That Little Band of Gold” is worthy of a feature’s place on any program. Only trouble with the picture is that it is too short. Outside of that it is all right – all right in every degree.

* from *Photo-Play Review*, April 20, 1915

Mabel Normand Not Married

An ambitious but misguided press agent of a Los Angeles theatre started a rumor to the effect that Mabel Normand, “Queen of the Movies,” and Bert Levey, a theatrical agent, were married and the affair caused Miss Normand much annoyance. She was in San Francisco at the time and when the report reached her ears she sent the following telegram to the Keystone studios at Edendale:

“To all my friends in the Keystone, Greetings: Be assured that I am not married and have no such thought. Some foolish person evidently thought to perpetrate an April fool joke which was both cruel and misplaced. My love and best wishes to you all. Please post on bulletin.

Mabel Normand”

At about the same time Mr. Levey sent a wire discharging the press agent. Levey is not even a friend of Miss Normand--merely an acquaintance of the most casual sort, having met her in connection with the “Tillie’s Punctured Romance” feature which Mr. Levey controls in several states.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, April 21, 1915

Also Films

Mack Sennett is playing a leading role in the new six reel comedy feature which he is producing, in which Miss Normand, Owen Moore and Ford Sterling are featured.¹⁴¹

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, April 23, 1915

Now that Mabel Normand, Keystone comedy star, has returned from San Francisco, Mack Sennett, managing director of all the Keystone companies, will resume work on the six reel feature that is nearing completion. Mr. Sennett himself is playing an important part in the film, together with Miss Normand, Ford Sterling, Owen Moore and other prominent actors. More elaborate scenery and costumes are being used in this multiple-reel than have ever been seen in any one comedy that has ever been made by any company and, notwithstanding the unprecedented

¹⁴¹ This clipping refers to the film *Oh! Mabel Behave*, which was not released until 1922. Why this film’s release was delayed so long we can only speculate. The following, however, are some possible explanations:

1) The film apparently wasn’t very good, was consequently left not properly finished (by the time of its 1922 release, some shots had been clumsily added; using doubles for some of the male leads), and thought unfit to be released at the same time as the higher quality Triangle vehicles; something apparently supported by a reviewer who not so long ago of this writing screened the film in Pordenone, Italy: In a letter from Steve Massa to silent film comedy historian Joe Moore (which Mr. Moore kindly sent me relevant portions of), Mr. Massa gave this blunt assessment: of the film which had just recently resurfaced, and was screened

“Out of 43 minutes Mabel appeared in about 8, and the rest was Ford Sterling mugging wildly without a gag or plot in sight. I think it’s the worst Sennet film I’ve ever seen. David Robinson took a lot of heat on this one but he told me that the restoration wasn’t quite finished when he had to choose the films, so he took a chance on it sight unseen. It was a beautiful restoration though.

“Given Mabel’s short on screen time I wonder if she maybe left the production early on and then Mac tried to pad it out and come up with some sort of completed film and failed. The fact that he sat on it for several years was never very promising that it might be a missing classic.”

2) Sennett made the film, outside official Triangle auspices, as insurance in his dealings with them., and as something to have on hand as property if things didn’t work out -- as of course they ultimately did not. It was only then at this 1922 date that he thought he could release it without any possible legal complications.

For more, see: <http://www.looking-for-mabel.webs.com/ohmabelbehave.htm>

success of the first six reel Keystone, "Tillie's Punctured Romance," there is every indication that the new release will be a superior product both artistically and financially.

* from *Photoplay* Weekly, April 30, 1915

Miss Mabel Normand, "Queen of the Movies," was greatly annoyed a few days ago by a "nut" who followed her to her home and later to the Keystone studio. He informed the gardener at her home that he was the "King of the Movies," but being no respecter of any royalty other than his employer, he chased the "King" into the street. The self-made "King" waited until Miss Normand left her home to go to the studio and followed her, attempting to enter when she did. He was promptly seized by the gateman and placed under arrest.

* from unidentified periodical, dated May 1915

Having taken all sorts of spectacular chances before the camera, Miss Mabel Normand is here shown in a moment of comparative quiet.

Because the motion picture art is so new and unfettered by tradition, because its possibilities are even now admittedly unguessed, it is enlisting the eager efforts of producers, writers, scientists, young aspirants for dramatic fame, and actors and actresses who have already won success on the real stage. The earlier pictures reproduced, as do many still, simple stage plays, thereby providing an inexpensive form of amusement; but, as an expert in the field said recently, "The true function of the film is to show that which could not be shown on the stage." And that is what the film is now doing. The film shows us grand dramatic and historic spectacles acted by hundreds of characters in the proper surroundings: Rome, Egypt, the Saharan desert, or our own forests, plains and hills. It shows us the hidden lives of plants and animals, the wonders of the laboratory and of physical science. The pictures on this page relate to a little of what is being done in the motion picture world, showing a few -- a very few -- of those who are doing it

Rushing along at seventy miles an hour in a motor driven by a daring engineer called "the Speed Demon." Or something else equally suggestive is merely commonplace in Motion Picture Land. Ability and courage to ride restive horses, to swim, to scale steep cliffs and high castle walls, to dive from great heights, and to perform other sensational and athletic feats are valuable qualities in one department of film

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, May 1915

The Speed Demon

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[Caption to accompanying photo:] Rushing along at seventy miles an hour in a motor driven by a daring engineer called "the Speed Demon." Or something else equally suggestive is merely commonplace in Motion Picture Land. Ability and courage to ride restive horses, to swim, to scale steep cliffs and high castle walls, to dive from great heights, and to perform other sensational and athletic feats are valuable qualities in one department of film

* from *Photoplay*, May 1915

" Grace Kingsley

"...Put your mind on the fashions and anticipate changes," said Miss Mabel Normand, the popular New York motion picture actress at present appearing in the Keystone pictures. "It's not hard if you watch the tendency of fashions to prophesy what the next thing's going to be.

"I get many fashion tips from my mother, who lives in New York and is in touch with the leading fashion firms there. But I don't rely too much on today, for pictures taken today must represent tomorrow's fashions else they will be out of date when the film is shown.

"Praise be, I'm doing a costume play of 1820 at present, and all I had to do was to go to the library and browse 'round till I found pictures of that date.

"Don't you think this gold thread dress is pretty? Silks, velvets, satins and flowered and striped materials are best in pictures. I often have materials photographed before I make them up."

* from *Photoplay*, May 1915

· interview with Mack Sennett by Harry Carr

"When Miss Normand first came to my company," said Sennett in his club the other night, "She got such a small salary that I can't think of any word short enough to tell about it. Now she gets the second or third highest salary in the picture business.

"Miss Normand is such a wonderful success even more on account of her head than her good looks. She is quick as a flash and just naturally funny. She is funny to talk to. She seems to think in sparks."

Sennett was asked if Miss Normand didn't have troubles like other people learning to act. "Worse," he said. "The trouble with her was inducing her to keep quiet. Like most girls with quick thoughts, she acted quickly. She moved so quickly that the audience couldn't get it. Deliberation and poise were lessons she had to learn. It was a tough job getting her to slow down. After that, she took up the problem of getting what I call 'man comedy' -- that is, the repressed stuff. Not just flying around but sitting still and showing the changing thoughts on one's face."

* from *The Photoplayer's Weekly*, May 7, 1915

Burbank Congratulates Mabel

Luther Burbank, the floriculture and horticulture wizard, recently visited Los Angeles, and while there made a special trip to the rose gardens owned by Miss Mabel Normand, "Queen of the Movies." The dainty Keystone star proved a charming and interesting hostess to Mr. Burbank, who spent several hours with Miss Normand among her choice collection of roses and, after completing his inspection of the gardens of Chateau Normand, expressed his opinion that Miss Normand has one of the best collections of roses in the world. He was profuse in his congratulations and Miss Normand feels that her efforts in gathering together her many varieties of cuttings has been well rewarded.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, May 14, 1915

Mabel's Mail

Mabel Normand, Keystone star comedienne, has a secretary to care for her correspondence which has long since overflowed all possibility of personal attention. Last month she received a total of seven hundred and twenty-six letters from all parts of the world. Many contain requests for photographs; others seek advice about sisters or daughters entering the moving picture profession and some are freak letters on all manner of subjects. Much of the accumulation is handed to Miss Normand who dictates the replies. Some of the letters, such as requests for photographs are handled by the ordinary routine.

Last month one letter was received from a wealthy but eccentric lady residing in South Carolina who expressed her desire to adopt Miss Normand. In part the letter follows:

"One of my amusements in this little Southern town is visiting the moving picture theatre. I thought it was a very sinful sort of pleasure for several years until I was induced to make a visit with a friend, but I have found that it is really innocent of evil consequences. I have seen you in many pictures and am full of sympathy for the rough treatment that you receive in some of them. How much better it would be if you could live in a quiet, restful place such as this?"

Mabel replied, thanking the dear old lady for her sincere kindness but assuring her that rest and quiet were as foreign to her nature as the Swanee River is to icebergs.

* from *Motography*, May 15, 1915

Mabel Normand and Roscoe Arbuckle (Fatty) arrived back at the studios, having been at the San Francisco Exposition for two weeks on the grounds of which they staged two hilarious comedies. They also brought back about one thousand feet of film of the Exposition, which will be used for educational purposes.

* from *Motography*, May 15, 1915

The six-reel Sennett feature which has been in the making for the last two months and in which are being featured Mabel Normand, Mack Sennett, Ford Sterling, Owen Moore and almost all the other members of the stock company, will be finished within the next week if the good weather keeps up.

* from *Pictures and Picturegoer*, May 15, 1915

How these players do enjoy themselves! The other night a big American exhibitor visiting Los Angeles gave a banquet to the Keystone players, and after it the players gave an impromptu show of their own. Fatty Arbuckle sang several selections, Ford Sterling recited a German dialect story, Syd Chaplin gave a Cockney dialect recitation, while Mabel Normand demonstrated the latest society dances.

Appropriate favours were at each guest's place, Mabel Normand being given a miniature diving Venus; Ford Sterling a stuffed doll; Roscoe Arbuckle a doll representing a fat boy; Chester Conklin a saw and saw-buck; Harry McCoy a "snookums"--his nickname among the players; Minta Durfee a kewpie doll; Mark Swain a miniature ambrose, and Syd Chaplin a k'nut.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, May 19, 1915

Playing Post office

Mabel Normand, Keystone star comedienne, has been obliged to hire a secretary care for her correspondence. Last month she received a total of 726 letters from all parts of the world.

* from *Photoplay*, June 1915

· from "Impressions" by Julian Johnson

Mabel Normand: a kiss that explodes in a laugh; cherry bon-bons in a clown's cap; sharing a cream puff from your best girl; a slap from a perfumed hand; the sugar on the Keystone grapefruit.

* from *Photoplay*, June 1915

· Grace Kingsley

Chateau Normand

Mabel Normand's home is a big two-story house in a semi-colonial style. Its high ceilings and roomy stretches give a vastly restful effect.

The dining room which is used much as a living room, is a long apartment with high beamed ceilings and wainscoting of mission oak. Collecting odd bits of furniture is one of Miss Normand's hobbies, and her graceful Chippendale would gladden the heart of the most discriminating connoisseur. A wide grate at either end of the room glows with fragrant log, and the walls are decorated with antlered heads that are mementos of hunting trips in the mountains of California.

Miss Normand's bedroom is as distinctive as the great dining room. A Louis Quatorze bed, for which she has been offered big sums, and a sleeping porch for use in hot weather, are the two items of interest in this part of the house.

There is a big garage at the back of the house.

Miss Normand owns two pedigree collie dogs, whose ancestors slept before the firesides of the first families of the land in the days before the Civil war. There is a rose garden at the rear of the house where the owner delights to walk early in the morning.

* from *Pictures and the Picturegoer*, June 12, 1915

"QUEEN OF THE MOVIES."

Mabel Normand, the famous comedienne with the Keystone Film Company, was approached by a representative of the most powerful vaudeville organisation [sic] in the United States, and an offer of thirty-weeks engagement at an enormous salary was offered. Miss Normand was unable to accept, as she is signed up on a contract with the Keystone Company, and receives a salary that is quite sufficient to make vaudeville temptations of little account to her. Miss Normand has been with the Keystone Company since it made its first picture in 1912, and is as much a part of Keystone as a lens is of a camera.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, June 24, 1915

Mabel Normand has engaged a cottage at Venice and spends much time there. Her town house is not closed for the summer, however, as she motors from beach to city and back daily.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, June 24, 1915

The huge concrete tank which serves as an artificial lake in the making of Keystone comedies, is a popular spot during the warm summer days. As soon as the light begins to go in the afternoon the greater portion of the Keystoneers don bathing suits, and as much rivalry exists among the many expert swimmers, the impromptu competitions are of interest to the crowd that surrounds the tank. Mabel Normand leads in swimming skill and is really a wonderful mistress of aquatic sports. She excels in high diving, long and short distance swimming and duration under water.

One day last week Fred Fishback, a powerful young man who acts as assistant director for Walter Wright, was stunned by contact with the side of the tank through a misjudged dive. Although an excellent swimmer, he was rendered temporarily helpless and would have been in great danger of drowning had not Miss Normand plunged in and rescued him.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, June 24, 1915

Mabel Normand recently paid \$45 for hospital service when her blue-ribbon cat became ill. After the cat was discharged as cured it was brought home and died the following day. Henceforth Miss Normand will purchase nothing but stuffed cats.

* from *Motography*, June 26, 1915

World famous as a comedienne, Mabel Normand, known wherever films known as "Keystone Mabel," couples her success with that of her great director, Mack Sennett. She first worked with Mr. Sennett in the old Biograph days, and when he left that organization to form the now celebrated Keystone company, she joined him immediately and they have worked hand in hand to accomplish the astonishing success of their special brand of film. Miss Normand's capacity as an actress is of a special nature. She astounds by her ability to play rough and tumble parts and at the same time preserve her immaculate femininity intact. How she does it is as much of a secret as the peculiar, unusual and essentially different type of make-up she achieves in each separate part she is called on to play.

Miss Normand, whose picture career began before a Vitagraph camera and continued, after a few months with Biograph, in her association with the Keystone brand produced at the Edendale studios, has devoted herself entirely to comedy. The Keystone comic films captivated the public from the start. They have a character all their own. Mr. Sennett's fertile brain brought forth one novel plot after another, each more fantastic, more excruciatingly funny than the last. Miss Normand's contribution to these creations was not her appearance alone.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, June 27, 1915

" Clem Pope

(Los Angeles)--Pretty soft for some of these Keystone actors this nice warm weather. While the mercury is trying to blow out the top of the bulb, the water in the Keystone tank gurgles merrily while the actors do the sea nymph stuff. The other day Fred Fishback, in diving in the plunge, misjudged the distance and collided gracefully and firmly with the concrete wall, and was rendered temporarily helpless. Mabel Normand did the Carnegie stunt and saved him. Sure I know that Fred Palmer is a publicity man, he has to make a living some way.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, July 1915

Great Cast Contest

Best Leading Woman ¾ Mary Pickford

Best Character Woman ¾ Norma Talmadge

Best Comedian (male) ¾ Charlie Chaplin

Best Comedian (female) ¾ Mabel Normand

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, July 8, 1915

No medals have ever been pinned on Raymond Hitchcock's manly breast for proficiency in equestrian sports, but since he became a member of Mack Sennett's Keystone comedy forces he has not refused to take a chance at anything that has been suggested when the value of a picture has been at stake. So when he was requested to ride an emotional horse in the high with no emergency brake, he bravely mounted and exhibited all the nonchalance of old Colonel Cody himself. But the horse knew the difference, and, taking the bit in his teeth, he set out to shatter a few records. "Hitchy" did a Todd Sloan crouch and he and his mount disappeared in a cloud of dust.

Miss Mabel Normand, who rides as if she had been born in the saddle, saw the getaway and leaped onto her mount, following in the wake of the runaway. After a half mile chase, she caught up and grasped "Hitchy's" bridle, pulling up his steed and rescuing a panting star from what might have been a serious fall. After changing horses Mr. Hitchcock resumed the scene and all was well. The picture, one of Mr. Sennett's latest two reel features, will soon be released.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, July 8, 1915

Mabel Normand, featured Keystone star, owns a summer home in Bear Valley, and one of the greatest delights of her life is to take parties of friends on weekend parties. This summer, however, the important parts she is playing in two reel features make it impossible to get away from the studio long enough to make the trip up into the hills, so Miss Normand has engaged a cottage at Santa Monica and motors to and from the beach daily. Merry gatherings at this seaside residence take the place of the hunting and fishing trips that had been planned for the Bear Valley visits but the "Queen of the Movies" contemplates enjoying a week or two at her mountain home later in the season.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, July 11, 1915

" Clem Pope

(Los Angeles) -- On July 9 a party of Keystone players will prove that they are ladies and gentlemen outside of the routine of work and appear at a benefit at St. Catherine's Church. Among those who will be present are Raymond Hitchcock, Mabel Normand, Roscoe Arbuckle, Harry Booker, Phyllis Allen, Polly Moran, Ford Sterling, Chas. Parrott, Chas. Avery, Harry McCoy and Glen Cavender.

* from *Moving Picture World*, July 17, 1915

Last week the Los Angeles Baseball Club held a benefit for the widow of "Hap" Hogan, who died here recently. The picture people gave their generous support, there being representatives from several companies to draw the crowds. Charlie Chaplin and some Essanayers were there, and Ford and Mabel, with Roscoe, frolicked around on the lawns. James Snyder, while taking part in the funny ball game, fell and broke his shoulder.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, July 22, 1915

Mabel Normand, featured star with the Keystone Film Company, had three whole days vacation and she took advantage of her rest. Last winter Miss Normand purchased a sixty-foot yacht and had it thoroughly overhauled and refurnished throughout. When it was completed it was a thing of beauty--but since the rainy season the "Queen of the Movies" has been too busy helping Mack Sennett take advantage of the sunny weather in making of Keystone two-reel features to find time for yachting. When the three-day vacation came along Mabel stocked up the craft and took a party of friends to Catalina, cruising around the island and enjoying the breezes, fishing and quiet of the Pacific in its most pacific condition.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, July 29, 1915

Mabel Normand killed a five foot rattler last week. As she was motoring through a canyon south of Los Angeles she caught sight of some flowers and stepped from her car to pick them. While walking through a clump of sage brush she heard the ominous sound of a rattler and jumped to one side just in time to escape its strike. Seizing a stick which lay nearby she struck at the reptile and quite by accident she admits, caught it fairly on the head, stunning it. Picking up a heavy stone she crushed its head. In order to prove her story was not of the fish variety she threw the snake into her car and brought it to the studio.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, July 29, 1915

Mack Sennett, managing director of the Keystone Film company, took a group of Keystone players to San Francisco to attend the ball which marked the closing of the Exhibitors' Convention last week. With Mr. Sennett were Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Owen Moore, Charlie Murray and others. The party remained in San Francisco three days, visiting the Fair and returning on Tuesday, July 20th, with the exception of Mr. Sennett, who went to Denver and up into the San Juan country of Colorado, where he will spend a short vacation in the mountains, fishing and resting before returning to Los Angeles a week later.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, July 29, 1915

Mabel Normand Routs Burglar

Mabel Normand, Keystone star, put a burglar to rout in an unrehearsed comedy scene at the Keystone studio one afternoon last week. It was late and nearly everyone had left for home. Miss Normand motored to the studio from her cottage at the beach, having forgotten a suitcase which she had left in her dressing room. A daylight burglar had walked through the studio entrance while the watchman was not looking and had gone up to the second tier of dressing rooms. When Miss Normand arrived she entered her room and found the roughly clad man bending over her trunk. Thinking him to be the janitor she was not frightened while the intruder immediately became panic stricken. As he backed out of the room Miss Normand picked up a heavy medicine ball which was lying in her room, and flung it at the man, striking him on the chest. "Take that old thing out and put it in the property room," she exclaimed. "It's too hot to exercise except at the beach." The man was taken by surprise--the force of the ball overbalanced him and he fell over the railing on the balcony and to the floor below. Before Miss Normand could rush to his aid he had picked himself up and the last seen of him he was running toward the hills at top speed.

* *Moving Picture World*, July 31, 1915

The crowning event of the convention [held in San Francisco, July 13-17, 1915] was the grand ball, held in the Municipal Auditorium in the Civic Center. This event had been widely heralded, and extensive preparations made, a feature of the arrangements having been the bringing from Los Angeles of almost fifty prominent screen artists from

the leading studios. As was the case with the convention itself, the task of arranging the details of the ball devolved upon the chairman of the Convention Committee, M. E. Cory, and much of the credit for the success of this affair must be given him.

Owing to the fact that the historic old Liberty Bell arrived in San Francisco late Friday evening, some of the plans for the ball had to be changed at the last minute and many of the dignitaries of the state and city were unable to be present until the festivities of the evening were well under way. Governor Johnson, who was to have led the grand march with Geraldine Farrar, was a member of the committee that brought the historic relic to the exposition grounds and unfortunately could not be present. Mayor Rolph was also absent, but representatives of the city government were on hand to grace the occasion.

The gathering of screen favorites was fully up to the expectation of the ball committee, and during the early part of the evening the boxes they occupied were surrounded by eager throngs of admirers, the floor officers finding difficulty in keeping the crowd moving.

In keeping with the exposition and Liberty Bell spirit which prevailed, the hall was tastefully decorated in the exposition and national colors, and after the commencement of the grand march the scene was further enlivened by the releasing of hundreds of colored balloons.

The grand march was led by Carlyle Blackwell and Blanche Sweet, followed by other leading picture players, the new and retiring officers of the National League and the state and local organizations. Following this, the regular dance program began and lasted until the early morning hours. Owing to the immense size of the auditorium, and the fact that many who attended were onlookers occupying seats in the balcony, the floor was crowded at no time, and the attendance was larger than appeared to be the case. Motion Pictures were taken of the grand march by Mills Brothers. Mr. Sciaroni was in charge of the lighting and photographing. The pictures were shown at the Empress theater on Saturday evening...

Among the player folks and film men who were present and occupied boxes were Geraldine Farrar, Blanche Sweet, Carlyle Blackwell, Mabel Normand, Raymond Hitchcock, Mrs. Raymond Hitchcock (Flora Zabelle), Mack Sennett, Owen Moore, "Diamond Jim" Brady, Barney Baruch, Fred Mace, Marshall Neilan, Ella Hall, Robert Leonard, Hobart Bosworth, Hobart Henley, M. L. Markowitz, Bessie Barriscale, Howard Hickman, Frank Keenan, W. S. Hart, House Peters, Kenneth O'Hara, Myrtle Gonzales, Mrs. Gonzalez, Sam Spedon, William Duncan, Jesse Lasky, Morris Gest and wife, C. B. De Mille, W. W. Hodkinson, wife and party, Bobbie Harron, Mae Marsh, Dorothy and Lillian Gish, Mrs. Gish, Francis X. Bushman, Marguerite Snow, Irving Ackerman, Fred J. Balshofer, Marie Empress, Art Smith, aviator; Mrs. Smith and Manager William Bastar and Mrs. Bastar, G. M. Anderson, Victor Potel and Mrs. Potel, Ben Turpin, Jesse Jackson, and Shorty Jack Hamilton...

* from *Photoplay*, August 1915

Mabel Normand, comedy Grand Duchess of the Keystone, was offered thirty weeks on the "big time" at a salary that would stagger a Maharajah recently; but for several reasons, including her contract with Keystone, she turned it down.

* from *Photoplay*, August 1915

" Harry Carr

excerpted from a biography of Charlie Chaplin ...From all accounts he and the lovely Mabel Normand, now the best of friends and the warmest admirers of one another, got along about as well as a dog and cat with one soup bone to arbitrate. He told Mabel what he thought of her methods and Mabel told him a lot of things.

* from *Photoplay*, August 1915

The Girl On The Cover

by James R. Quirk

It was raining the first day I visited the Keystone Studio. The air was full of Glooms. Little Glooms slipped under the doors of the dressing rooms, clambered up over the mirrors, smuggled themselves into the damp wardrobes, took possession of the entire outfit and dripped over everything.

Joy and Cheer were unable to stand the terrific onslaught of the dismal army.

The enemy was in full possession of the capital of the Kingdom of Fun.

Lieutenant Mack Sennett and Sergeant Charlie "Hogan" Murray tried to rally the retreating forces, but the joys and cheers kept right on running.

Ford Sterling was peeved at Polly Moran because she refused to jump off a three-story building to make a thrill -- the first time Polly had ever balked at anything -- and of course Polly wasn't radiating joy right then either.

Chester Conklin did his best to start something, but Chester was struck by a shell of gloom gas and died like a hero.

Suddenly a loud chug-chug-chug-chug-chug (six cylinders) was heard outside. The prisoners held captured by the gloom army raised their heads. Even Ford grinned at Polly, and Polly grinned back and said she'd jump off a skyscraper if he said so.

The clouds rolled by. The sun burst forth. Joy and Cheer made a bayonet charge on the Gloom trenches, and nary a Gloom lived to claim a victory in the war reports.

Mabel Normand had arrived.

"Hello fellers," yells Mabel -- just like that, as she flashed her great laughing eyes around in a general greeting, and everyone drinks in the smile.

"Hello Mabel," they all yell back; and inside five minutes five cameramen are winding the funniest film comedies in the world into big black boxes, and half a hundred high salaried fun makers are seriously at work manufacturing laughs for the movie millions.

Now maybe Mabel didn't induce that shower to stop or lure out old Sol, but if that bright fellow has any appreciation of bewitching femininity at all he simply couldn't have resisted her.

After witnessing the wonderful metamorphosis which the presence of this girl brought about in that studio, I felt more convinced than ever that character and personality has brought out with marvelous accuracy by the camera and screen. The evidence of this is the failure of many great stage stars to shine with anything like equal candlepower on the films. The "close-up" generally tells the truth.

Just take Miss Normand at her screen value, and you know her.

Being a firm believer in "close-ups," I started out to get some of them on Miss Normand from her friends. I quit this very quickly. I was engulfed and overwhelmed with a tidal wave of adjectives, adverbs, superlatives, and other parts of speech they talk about in the grammar books. Mabel has no friends among her intimates. She has worshipers.

Her fame as a comedienne is coupled closely with the success of Mack Sennett, the director of the Keystone studios, but Sennett himself is the first to proclaim her capabilities as a creator of situations and the important part she has played in the tremendous task of organizing the forces of the company. Many of the comedy artists at the Keystone studios vow eternal gratitude to the girl who spent many hours aiding them in their own parts after she had spent a long, tiresome day at her own work.

If generosity ever becomes a fault, Miss Normand has one glaring defect. Although she draws one of the largest salaries in filmland, she will never be rich unless someone has a pocketbook guardian appointed for her. I do not mean that she is a spender. Mabel does not spend half as much on herself as others who earn one-fifth as much.

Here is just one little instance. It is typical. Miss Normand just cannot stand to see anyone else in need.

One day, away back of the properties, in an out of the way nook of the Keystone studios, she found a little extra girl crying, her head in her arms, bent over her meager little dressing table. In her outstretched hand was a telegram -- "Mother very sick; wants to see you; can you come home?"

Miss Normand lifted the little extra girl's head. She had never seen her before.

"Are you going?" she asked.

"No, I can't," was the sobbing answer.

"Well, you come right along with me," she commanded. "If your only trouble is money, you are going home to New York today."

Miss Normand's picture career began before a Vitagraph camera. She had been model in an exclusive Fifth Avenue shop before that. She was only with the Vitagraph a short time when she joined the old Biograph pioneers and was one of that famous group which included David Wark Griffith, Mary Pickford, Owen Moore, Mack Sennett, Florence Lawrence, Billy Quirk, Blanche Sweet, and others, who have since achieved fame.

From the start she demonstrated an unusual ability for comedy, and when Mack Sennett left the Biograph to start the Keystone company, Mabel went with him. The Keystone films made a hit from the start. They had a character all their own. Sennett's fertile brain -- and by the way, Miss Normand calls him "Nappy," short for Napoleon -- brought forth one novel plot after another, and Miss Normand was his right hand bower in working them out. Always brim-full of new ideas and ever creating new scenarios she helped Sennett make moving picture history out there in Edendale, Calif.

Miss Normand's views on the future of the comedy picture are enlightening.

"I make it a part of my daily work," she told me, "to attend theaters where they show Keystone pictures. I listen eagerly for criticisms among the audience and many times get good ideas in this way. But I do not confine myself to my own pictures either. I see everybody's. That is the only way I can keep in touch."

"The comedy of four or five years ago was very different affair from those made today, but I think there is still plenty of room for improvement, and the next few years will witness as great a development."

"Of course there will always be the slap-stick work. That brand of humor is still popular on the stage, with some people, and there will always be more or less of a demand for this kind of fun."

"Did you ever want to be a regular heroine without any comedy business to do?" I asked her.

"Goodness, yes," she answered. "But why should I go looking for such large competition?"

* from *Photoplay*, **Weekly**, August 5, 1915

Mack Sennett, Fred Mace, Mabel Normand, Raymond Hitchcock and others have been working at the beaches during the past hot week. It is strange how readily a director may switch his story so that the beach scenes are absolutely indispensable when the weather gets too hot to be comfortable at the studio.

* from *Photoplay*, **Weekly**, August 5, 1915

Mabel Normand, Keystone star, took exception to the statement of a Los Angeles "reformer" to the effect that no girl can work in motion pictures and retain her respectability. She wrote an article in reply which was immediately purchased by a national newspaper syndicate and it will be widely published at once.

* from *Photoplay*, **Weekly**, August 19, 1915

Mabel Normand, the favorite Keystone star, has written a song which will be published in the near future. Miss Normand is an accomplished musician and frequently entertains her friends with her vocal and instrumental accomplishments, but this is her first attempt at really publishing a song. She sang the ditty to her own piano accompaniment while Harry Williams and Jean Schwartz were present at her home one night this week and they enthused over the beauty of the thing, have urged her to take immediate action toward having it published.

* from *Photo-Play Review*, August 21, 1915

[photo caption] Mabel Normand and "Big Ben," the tame seal, disporting in the surf at Santa Catalina, Cal.

* from *Motography*, August 21, 1915

Reunion at Keystone

There was a grand reunion of the big factors in the success of the New York Motion Picture Corporation at the Keystone studios at Los Angeles the day following the signing of the incorporation papers of the Triangle Film

Corporation, when Messrs. Kessel, Bauman[n] and Sennett arrived from Colorado, where the \$5,000,000 corporation was put over.

The accompanying picture shows the gathering at the Keystone studio and reading from left to right in the picture one beholds Charles Kessel, Mabel Normand, Adam Kessel, Jr., C. O. Baumann and Mack Sennett.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, August 26, 1915

Mabel Normand, star of the Keystone Film company, got word one day recently that one of the seven Foy children was celebrating a birthday at the Foy bungalow down at Santa Monica. Mr. [Eddie] Foy was out with his director and supporting company working on a scene which was being made several miles from Los Angeles. Mabel was anxious to send a birthday present to the Foylet in question but not knowing whether it was one of the boys or one of the girls she was unable to decide on anything appropriate. So she called her car, drove to town and bought a gift for each of the seven and had her chauffeur hasten to the Foy party and deliver the goods. "I'm glad I never worked in the same company with Brigham Young," was Miss Normand's conclusion.¹⁴²

* from *Motography*, August 28, 1915

On Monday, August 2, the Los Angeles Boosters' Club show was given at Shrine Auditorium to a capacity audience and hundreds were turned away. Managing Director Mack Sennett of the Keystone Film Company supplied over one-third of the program. The Keystone artists who appeared with the permission of Mr. Sennett were Raymond Hitchcock, Jean Schwartz, Fred Mace, Harry Williams, Eddie Foy, Flora Zabelle, Charlie Murray, Ford Sterling, Roscoe Arbuckle, Syd Chaplin, Mack Swain, Chester Conklin, Mabel Normand and others.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, September 4, 1915

Octopus Seizes Mabel Normand

In making *My Valet*, Mack Sennett wrote in some scenes in which Mabel Normand and Fred Mace have a struggle in the surf. The scenes were taken at the beach at Santa Monica, where the surf is high at full tide and Mabel, being an excellent swimmer, did some astonishing work in the swirling waters. In one scene she is tied to a rock and the waves dash over her, completely submerging her at times. In this scene Miss Normand struggled frantically and Sennett and the other members of the company applauded her for her cleverness. When the scenes were over the struggles and cries of Miss Normand continued and Sennett swam out to where she was tied. Immediately he called for help and a half dozen men swam to him. It was found that a middle-sized devil fish had hold of Miss Normand's ankles and she had been held throughout the scene by the monster. She was released after a fight with the fish and it was soon killed. Miss Normand was almost hysterical for a few minutes but soon recovered her nerve and continued work. To those who see *My Valet*, it will be interesting to know that in the scene in which she is tied to the rock the sea terror has a firm hold on her feet and ankles.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, September 25, 1915

Mabel Normand Held Up

Mabel Normand, Keystone star, was the victim of footpads one night last week. Returning from the home of a friend located a block and a half from her own residence, Miss Normand refused to depend upon an escort and, merrily bidding her hostess and other friends goodnight, started homeward. She had not gone more than a block when a masked man stepped out from behind a tree and commanded her to put her hands up. "I never obeyed an order quicker in my life," said Miss Normand the next day in telling of her experience, "and I kept them up until the brut was convinced I had really left my purse at home and then I kept them up until I reached home. For once in my life I was scared out of my wits." The would-be thief escaped.

* from *Variety*, September 10, 1915

Mabel Normand defeated 20 others in a five-mile swim at Santa Monica recently.

* from *Motography*, September 11, 1915

Lillian Gish entertained recently at the Fine Arts studio Mabel Normand, the popular Keystone Triangle comedienne; Blanche Sweet and a party of friends. They remained to witness Miss Gish, Rozsika Dolly and Wilfred Lucas play a scene in their present starring vehicle, "The Lily and the Rose."

* from *Motography*, September 11, 1915

While Gus Edwards was playing the Orpheum theater in Los Angeles he and his "Song Review" stars, together with Nan Halperin and a number of others on the bill, visited the Keystone studios at the invitation of Mabel Normand and spent an interesting morning watching the making of scenes for the Sennett feature. They were guests of Miss Normand at dinner the same night, as were Eddie Foy, Mrs. Foy and the famous seven Foylets.

* from *N.Y. Dramatic Mirror*, September 15, 1915

" J. Van Cartwell

Extra! Mabel Normand has become a director. She recently returned to the studio with 500 feet of negative, and when it was developed and printed, it was found there was not a retake necessary in the whole lot. Sounds good, Mabel, but --

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, September 20, 1915

MABEL NORMAND FIGHTING DEATH ¹⁴³

¹⁴² Brigham Young had 57 children.

¹⁴³ The injury Mabel suffered which is referred to here is the one she received the night she walked in on Sennett and Mae Busch together, either in the way of being struck in the head, as told by Minta Durfee, or from being injured in a suicide attempt jumping off

While medical science waged a desperate battle for her life, Mabel Normand, famous film star and comedy queen, was unconscious and rapidly sinking today.

Her physician, Dr. O. M. Justice, early today stated that the chance for her recovery was slight.

Last night the beautiful movie star was in extremely low condition, according to advisors from the sick room, and not once during the night did she rally to consciousness.

Miss Normand, who was Charlie Chaplin's partner in the world of famous comedy acts, was held by thousands to be the most beautiful woman in filmdom. Today these thousands are anxiously awaiting developments from her sick room, and the laughter which she caused to rise to thousands of lips with her clever comedy is hushed by the seriousness of her condition.

According to Dr. Justice, Miss Normand has been unconscious for several days and has not responded to the efforts of science to restore her to normal condition. That no rally is expected today was the intimation given out from her sick room at the Baltic Apartments today.

Miss Normand's illness is attributed to an accident in the studio of the Keystone company, of which she is a leading lady, a little more than a week ago. It is stated that the beautiful star fell, sustaining injuries to her head.

Since the fall Miss Normand has suffered concussion of the brain and not once since the accident has she uttered a coherent word.

* from *Santa Monica Outlook*, September 21, 1915

Film Star Hurt in Rough Comedy

Although not out of danger, Miss Mabel Normand, one of the best known motion picture actresses before the public, was reported last night to be much improved, and her recovery is expected.

It was learned yesterday that Miss Normand was injured during the staging of a wedding scene at the Keystone studio. It was a typical wedding, which means there was considerable 'rough stuff.' Roscoe Arbuckle, the heavyweight comedian, was the bridegroom and Miss Normand the bride. It is not known whether the movie police force took part; but at any rate there was a general bombardment of old shoes and rice after the ceremony, and some enthusiastic celebrator hurled a boot at the bridal couple. Arbuckle dodged the boot, and it struck Miss Normand on the head.

A day later, however, she complained of pains in her head, and a short time later collapsed.

Mack Sennett, director general of the Keystone Company, had Miss Normand taken home to the Baltic Apartments, where she has been under the constant care ever since of Dr. O. M. Justice.

Mr. Sennett said yesterday that the accident was unavoidable and that no one could be blamed.

* from *Motography*, September 25, 1915

A brilliant after-dinner dance was given at the Hotel Alexandria Saturday, September 4, in honor of the three new vice-presidents of the Triangle Film Company, David W. Griffith, Thos. H. Ince and Mack Sennett. Many notable film stars were present to do honor to the heads of the Reliance-Majestic, New York Motion Picture Corporation and Keystone Film Company.

* from *New York Clipper*, September 25, 1915

" Paul Conlon

Mabel Normand may have occasional days of temperament and "nerves," but in a crisis she seems to be on the job. This week, when a laborer was run over by a street car in front of the studio, the men nearby were panic-stricken. Mabel kept her head, ordered the men to get water, 'phoned for an ambulance and, tearing an undergarment into strips, bound the man's wounds.

The plucky girl's first aid treatment saved the man's life.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, October 1915

Mabel Normand, the favorite Keystone star, has written a song which will be published in the near future. Miss Normand is an accomplished musician and frequently entertains her friends with song and piano.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, October 1915

Mabel Normand.

Dear Mabel, I pen you this line;

Your stunts in the Keystone are fine.

Folks may vote for their fat boys,

Funny Charlies and thin boys ¾

But you, jolly Mabel, for mine.

R. W. Tuckwell, Lloydminster, Sask., Can.

* from *Variety*, October 1, 1915

MY VALET

Santa Monica pier, Adela Rogers St. John. It is not clear which of the two incidents brought about this story, though Adela Rogers St. Johns version seems the more likely of the two given the serious nature of the emergency. Did then her being hit over the head with a vase, as Minta claimed, actually occur at all, or did this take place on a separate occasion? The answer to this is not at this time clear. *Blanche Sweet*: "I liked Mabel. She was a good friend of mine. I remember when we were with Biograph and were in a train on our way to California, she came into some kind of compartment I had and taught me how to smoke cigarettes, do little tricks, and things like that. Later in 1915, Mabel was very upset about Mae Busch, whom Mack Sennett took a fancy to. At the time I had a lovely Fiat. I drove it myself, but also I had a driver. We'd sit in the back seat, and drive down to the beach -- maybe Malibu, Santa Monica, or somewhere -- anything to distract her, not to worry about this affair. I think it may have helped a little. I knew her a little later on, too, when she and Mary Miles Minter were caught up in the Taylor case, and I think that had quite an effect on Mabel's career." Quoted in *Speaking of Silents* by William Drew.

Raymond Hitchcock is starred in the Mack Sennett production of the Keystone (Triangle) feature "My Valet." Hitchcock, a bachelor (this in itself is funny to those of us who know Raymond), takes a trip to the coast, accompanied by his valet (Mack Sennett). En route they are shown on a swaying train and indulge in seltzer bottle "jasbo." Taking a taxi to a hotel they encounter a girl on a runaway equine and Hitchcock jumps from the auto to the animal's back and brings him to a halt. The "girl" is Mabel Normand. Heroic stuff, which "Hitchy" handles in his inimitable comedy vein. Mabel had started for a gallop with a French nobleman (Fred Mace). "Hitchy" gives his card to Mabel, who tells her parents all about it. On reading the card, the father, a bearded old geezer, writes "Hitchy," saying that if he is the son of his old friend, to come at once, as the two fathers had betrothed "Hitchy" and Mabel when they were children. "Hitchy" doesn't know it is the girl he rescued and induces his valet to impersonate him, while he plays valet. The "slapstick" complications that ensue are fast and furious, and of tried and approved Keystone brand. They include the burning of father's whiskers, the breaking of crockery over people's craniums, automobile wrecks, near-drownings, and so on ad infinitum. The big climax is reached when Hitchcock sees Miss Normand drowning and jumps from his window with an umbrella for a parachute and lands in the ocean alongside Mabel, thereby effecting a thrilling rescue. The audience screamed with laughter at the innumerable sure-fire situations, which owe their origin to the old-time "nigger acts." (Jolo.)

* from *Pictures and the Picturegoer*, October 2, 1915

Wanted at the Front

"I have just seen the Hepworth Comedies as shown to our Tommies at the Front, and it is my opinion, and the opinion of many others, that the cinema must now play a very prominent part in the entertainment of our heroes. What is more likely to raise the drooping spirits of a jaded soldier than a good, rousing comedy? Now my word is—Chaplin must go. He is wanted 'somewhere near the fighting line.' He is great—inimitable—the One and Only. Wounded soldiers home from the Front have rapidly developed severe attacks of Chaplinitis, and have communicated it to their pals on their return to the trenches. It is the duty of the great B.P. [British People] to supply all the wants of their defenders, and the greatest want of these is Charlie. Another favorite wanted 'there' is Mabel Normand. How would light comedy suit Vivian Rich? Tommy would love her so!"

J. M' Q. (Edinburgh).

* from *Variety*, October 8, 1915

Mabel Normand Coming East

As soon as she recovers from her accident, Mabel Normand is coming east to locate permanently. She will be assigned to the Keystone's Fort Lee studio and work with Roscoe Arbuckle.

Keystone comedies have never been made in the east and the experiment will be watched with interest by the trade.

* from *Variety*, October 8, 1915

STOLEN MAGIC

This two part Keystone (Triangle) production is a much more felicitous scenario for the exploitation of Raymond Hitchcock's comicalities than the one shown at the Knickerbocker last week. In it he plays a helmeted gentleman who has just returned from India, bringing with him a collection of snakes and a knowledge of magic that is highly amusing. The escape and wriggling of the snakes creates numerous humorous situations, but the big scene is Hitchcock's recital of how he stole from a temple a scroll entitled "A Key to Magic," the possession of which gives one the pleasure of having his every wish gratified. At the opening of the story Hitchcock visits his newly married friend (Mack Sennett) and gets all tangled up with his friend's bride (Mabel Normand). Hitchcock, standing behind a pillar in the temple, sees a bewhiskered potentate wave the scroll and command a "cooch" dancer to materialize from a bathing pool and wriggle for him. Hitchcock gets possession of the coveted script and does likewise. Seated with legs crossed underneath him upon a divan while a juicy Oriental dancer wriggles before him, makes for an ideal opportunity for Hitchcock's display of libidinous appreciation of this form of entertainment.

* from *New York Clipper*, October 9, 1915

" Paul Conlon

Mabel Normand is on the way to recovery, and her thousands of friends are sighing with relief. For four long days the little Keystone actress lay unconscious, and the doctors held out little hope. Mabel was injured in a fall at the studio about two weeks ago.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, October 16, 1915

While Miss Mabel Normand, Keystone Film Company star, is still confined to her home as a result of the nearly fatal injuries which recently resulted from an accident at the studios, she is out of danger and well on the road to complete recovery. During her illness bulletins were read in cafes, theaters and other public places not only in Los Angeles, but in many other parts of the country. Miss Normand has probably made more people laugh than any other screen comedienne and the millions who have admired her beauty...

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, October 16, 1915

Mabel Normand has completely recovered from her recent serious illness and has gone to San Francisco, where she's due several weeks taking a complete rest visiting the Exposition. Miss Normand was in San Francisco with Roscoe Arbuckle and a company early in the year, and while there made a number of comedies, but was unable to spend much time at the Exposition. She is now taking advantage of the opportunity, and as soon as she has sufficiently rested, will return to Los Angeles.

* from *Motography*, October 30, 1915

Mabel Normand, featured Keystone star, who recently passed the crisis of an illness that very near had a fatal termination, has fully recovered and is up and about again. She will take a rest of several weeks, however, before resuming work.

* from *Fulton Theatre Magazine*, New York City, week of Nov. 1, 1915, vol. II, No. 5

Speaking about shoes!

As she is now up and about again, Mabel Normand has decided to take a well earned vacation before returning to her work. Miss Normand's condition was not so critical as the report that was given out tried to make it. There is always danger when one is rapped on the head with a speeding shoe, when you stop to consider the size of the shoes that are used in all comedies.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, November 20, 1915

Appearing in her first picture since the accident which nearly resulted in her death some weeks ago, Mabel Normand, the Keystone star, was injured Wednesday when a runaway monoplane got beyond control of its amateur driver, comedian Chester Conklin. The movie queen was dragged along the rough ground for nearly 100 yards. She was given immediate medical attention and rushed to her home, where she is reported as recuperating rapidly.

Conklin was in the driver's seat and before he could extricate himself was severely burned on the legs and arms by gasoline which caught fire from the hot motor.

The machine, completely demolished, was a military monoplane and was being used in the filming of a comedy. Conklin was instructed to cut off the power after he had rolled a short distance down the field. Becoming confused, he opened the throttle and the increase in power caused the machine to shoot into the air.

* from *Motography*, November 27, 1915

Miss Mabel Normand, featured Keystone star who recently recovered from the effects of an almost fatal accident and who has been enjoying a vacation at the San Francisco Exposition during her convalescence, will leave for New York shortly, accompanied by Roscoe Arbuckle...

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, December 1915

Echoes of the Great Cast Contest

On September 7th the ballot-boxes closed on what was perhaps the most remarkable contest ever conducted. We offered over \$2,000 worth of prizes to the winners, the first prize to go to the player receiving the largest number of votes for any one part. Mrs. Mary Maurice, having won first prize, promptly called at this office, at our request, and, after looking over the prizes, selected the \$500 Columbia Grand Grafanola and \$50 worth of records. We then telegraphed Charles Chaplin, who is in California, and he wired that he preferred the \$100 gold watch and chain as a memento of his having won second prize. Next came little Bobby Connelly and his mother, and they decided that they preferred the \$175 Columbia phonograph. Mr. W. Chrystie Miller was next notified, and "The Grand Old Man of the Movies" came in from the Actors' Home on Staten Island, and selected the \$75 gold watch and chain for the fourth prize. We next telegraphed Mabel Normand, who is in California, to select the fifth prize, but to the time of going to the press (October 13th), we have not heard from Miss Normand. Perhaps she has not yet recovered from her recent illness, and therefore we and our readers, and the other eighteen winners, must await Miss Normand's selection before the other prizes can be awarded.

The World's Greatest Photoplay Cast

1. Leading Man	7. Comedian (Male)
Earle Williams.....1,571,655	Charles Chaplin.....1,934,550
2. Leading Woman	8. Comedian (Female)
Mary Pickford.....1,615, 160	Mabel Normand.....1,709,390
3. Old Gentleman	9. Handsome Young Man
W. Chrystie Miller...1,725,450	Antonio Moreno.....1,664,825
4. Old Lady	10. Beautiful Young Woman
Mary Maurice.....2,277,500	Anita Stewart.....1,523,990
5. Character Man	11. Villain
Romaine Fielding.....1,115,985	Bryant Washburn....1,445,605
6. Character Woman	12. Child
Norma Talmadge.....1,201,070	Bobby Connelly.....1,732,710

* from *Fulton Theatre Magazine*, New York City, week of Dec. 13, 1915, vol. II, No.11

When Mabel Normand has nothing else to do or the publicity man gets short on copy the little comedienne shows her obliging disposition by going out and getting hurt. Remember how all the papers nearly had her dead some time ago? To see her now one would never imagine that so slight a sickness could possibly get so much space. This time the accident occurred in the aeroplane that is being used in one of the Keystone productions. Joe Murray thought he had he had the thing tamed down, but, like a great many other professionals, it realized its own importance and simply acted all over the place. Chester Conklin, who was badly burned by the explosion of the gasoline, and was unable to appear for work for quite a while. The accident happened when some one, instead of shutting off the power when the machine got out of range of the camera, turned the throttle wide open. The plane first leaped into the air then buried itself in the ground from sheer mortification. Neither Mabel nor Conklin had ever handled a machine of the sort and both were dragged a distance before the plane was stopped. Several mechanics and assistants who reached the scene shortly after the accident, extinguished the fire and carried the players to the studio, where they were given medical attendance and then taken home. A few days later the plane did the same stunt, with the result that another

propeller has been put down on the wanted list. Really, they will have to try harsher means, such as salt, to tame the wild flyer.

1916

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, January 1, 1916

Mabel Normand, "The Keystone Girl," arrived in New York yesterday. Roscoe Arbuckle, "Fatty," accompanied her from California and they are to remain here for some time making comedies for the Triangle at the Knickerbocker Theatre. Before they left the Coast they completed "Fatty and Mabel Adrift," which will be shown soon at the Knickerbocker. A company will be recruited in the East to work under the direction of Arbuckle. Miss Normand will be the feminine star in the new Keystone production.

* from *Motography*, January 8, 1916

Wednesday morning there drifted into Chicago from the west a gay party of twelve Keystoneers, headed by Roscoe Arbuckle and Mabel Normand. The company left Los Angeles on Sunday and is headed for New York City, and more particularly the Ft. Lee studios of the Triangle Film Corporation, where some three months will be spent by the Keystone folks in making comedies with an eastern setting and perhaps even more laugh possibilities than those which the public has already seen.

Though a stop of but a few hours was made in Chicago, the party leaving on an early afternoon train for the east, time was found for a merry luncheon at the College Inn, where the Keystoneers, between bites, shook hands with numerous press representatives of the daily newspapers and talked as they ate of the things they hoped to accomplish in the east. Both Mr. Arbuckle and Miss Normand are delighted at again having a chance to renew eastern acquaintances and once more see the bright lights of Broadway, for many months have lapsed since either of them have been outside California. Among the party gathered about the College Inn table were William N. Selig of the Selig Polyscope Company, Julian Johnson and James R. Quirk of *Photoplay Magazine* and Kitty Kelly of the *Chicago Times*.

After their three months' sojourn in the east the Keystone folks expect to return to Los Angeles, making a picture as they go, and on the return trip pausing in Chicago for several days, during which time many scenes will be taken in the Windy City.

* from *Moving Picture World*, January 18, 1916

Mabel Normand and Roscoe Arbuckle spent their first New Year's in several seasons within the charmed circle of New York stageland. The white lights beamed merrily for them, the cup of joy effervesced, and the plaudits of admiring throngs for their real selves brought a novel pleasure. In plain vernacular, Fatty and Mabel are on the job in New York. With their Eastern Keystone Company, including Minta Durfee, Al St. John and others, they arrived in the metropolis Thursday afternoon, December 30. The party came through direct from the coast, escorted by Traveling Passenger Pike of the San Pedro Road. They were met at Grand Central Station by Frank Myers of the New York Central, and a number of the New York Motion Picture and Triangle executives.

Miss Normand is looking fresh as a daisy, but it was deemed best not to break the journey for picture-taking en route, since her recovery from serious accident has been so recent. Mr. Arbuckle, the director of the company, said he would start work soon at the Willat studios in Fort Lee.

Mrs. Ford Sterling (Teddy Sampson) and Syd Chaplin were among the friends who greeted the newcomers at the station.

On New Year's night, Mr. Arbuckle, Miss Normand and the other Keystoneers were the guests of the New York Globe at the Lexington Opera House. They saw "Peter Rabbit in Dreamland," and two thousand people saw Fatty and "the Keystone girl" and applauded the flesh-and-blood authors of millions of laughs. After the hard, grueling work at Edendale, the Keystone folk enjoyed every minute of the New Year's festivities.

* from *Photoplay*, February 1916

Mabel Normand's jinx seems vigorously alive. But recently she recovered from being brow beaten by a brick she fell out of an aeroplane only a week or two after returning to work. Fortunately the vehicle was just landing, and she got away with nothing more than a whole basket of scratches and a little bag of sprains.

* excerpt from *Variety*, February 4, 1916, re *Fatty and Mabel Adrift*

Picture is amusing with some new and good effects, without the customary dose of messy slapstick one expects in a Keystone with these principals...The picture is a sure laughmaker and as it is fairly clean, it is the more worthy.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, February 13, 1916

More Plots and Fewer Pies For Miss Normand

Philosophers who write on feminine psychology on the women's page of daily papers tell us we must not expect to find a pretty woman with a sense of humor. Marital advisors warn men who would marry beauties that they must be prepared to have all their best dinner table jokes fall flat. Your real beauty, these sages declare, is a person of limited moods and those moods are serious ones. Her soulful eyes will still remain soulful even when you are doing your best to get off something really good, and her cupid's bow mouth won't stretch even a little bit when you read her a particularly choice bit from your favorite humorist.

In living refutation of these theories is Mabel Normand of Keystone-Triangle fame. That Miss Normand is unusually pretty, all those who have seen her in Keystone comedies know, and she might have easily gone through her life playing pretty and polite little heroines if Fate had not thrown her into Keystone farces.

Once started on a comedy career, however, Miss Normand proved to the world in general that it is quite as possible to laugh at a pretty woman as to sigh for her. Audiences began to watch for the pretty girl who did not seem to mind being tied to a rock in the middle of the ocean, or hit with a blueberry pie or thrown from an aeroplane. And no matter how rough the comedy, Keystone Mabel never flinched but emerged at the end with her hair still in curl and a smile on her face.

And now it is understood that as a reward for her patient comedy work Miss Normand will be given an opportunity to do more serious things. There is a chance that she may follow the lead of Willie Collier and other New York Corporation stars by paying a short little visit to Inceville. And while she is paying calls there is a possibility that she may be sociable and drop in the fine Arts studio and make a feature or so. So Keystone Mabel is quite likely to become Triangle Mabel in the near future.

A representative of the Morning Telegraph went to Fort Lee to get Miss Normand's answer to the question of "How to be funny though beautiful," and found her just about to start work on a scene from her latest comedy with Roscoe Arbuckle.

"This will be the second comedy that we have made since we came East about the first of the year," Miss Normand explained. "Our first was 'He Did and He Didn't,' which has just been shown at the Knickerbocker. It was just a little bit different from most of the comedies we have been doing because it really had a plot."

"I hope that all the pictures we are to do in the future will have plots. Even the slenderest kind of story helps a lot and gives us many more opportunities than the kind with no kind of background at all.

"Do I mind doing rough work? Well, not especially, though I would really rather not. I am not exactly fearless about it either, though I don't like to refuse to do anything that is put up to me. I am not at all the kind who can take any risk without thinking about it first, so I don't suppose you could call me really brave.

"You will probably remember that we have done some very rough work in our time, but I think that farce comedies are going to get quieter all the time. In fact, I believe I can say that I have been hit by my last pie.

"Have I any ambitions for serious acting? Perhaps I have. You know I was in the Biograph company with Mary Pickford, Blanche Sweet and the Gishes and I always played straight heroine roles. D. W. Griffith still insists that I am no comedienne and some day I may go back to drama."

The Morning Telegraph representative then asked Miss Normand if she thought it was hard for a pretty woman to be a success in film comedy.

"Yes," she answered. "Most pretty girls who go into comedy work are content to be merely pretty. The great difference is to put character into acting without either distorting your face or using comedy make-up. Anyone who photographs well can walk on a scene and flirt with the comedian which is all that most good-looking girls are required to do in comedies. It takes very little ability on their part for all they have to do is follow direction. (And here Miss Normand gave an imitation of a comedy coquette flirting according to the commands of her director). But to make a farce heroine more than a mere doll, you must think out the situation yourself and above all you must pay great attention to every little detail in the scene. The little bits of business that seem insignificant are what make good comedy."

And so after all, according to Miss Normand, this business of being funny is a rather serious affair. As everyone knows it takes an intelligent person to be effectively foolish and it is only clever people who are good at being nonsensical. You cannot make other laugh at a joke that you yourself do not understand, and so an actress cannot hope to make a situation funny to her audience unless she herself makes good use of every humorous possibility.

Miss Normand confesses that when she is not actually filming pictures, she is out looking at them. The tremendously increased output has kept her pretty busy, but so far she has managed to keep step with the producers and she is as well posted on the very latest thing in the very latest releases as the first small boy you may meet on the street.

But motion pictures are not Miss Normand's only source of instruction. Being an artist in her line and having a sense of dramatic values as well as a sense of humor, she knows what fundamental principles underlie all pantomime.

"Do you know what I like best about working here in New York," she asked. "It is the wonderful opportunities you have for seeing the best theatrical performances. I don't mean the Broadway productions, but the entertainments that you can see here and nowhere else. Why, you have the opera at the Ballet Russe and the French theatre all here at the same time. The pantomime of the French players is really wonderful. Even though one doesn't always understand what they are saying, it is worth while to watch the work of foreign actors. They are so careful and conscientious. Each minute piece of business is a marvel of accuracy and precision, and they are never so anxious for big effects that they overlook smaller chances. I have learned a lot from them."

Wise Mabel Normand. She not only knows what she wants to learn, but where to go and learn it.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, March 1916

Mabel Normand again writes us, apologizing for delaying the awarding of the prizes, due to her illness. But bless her heart, such apology was not necessary. Miss Normand's charming note follows:

My Dear Mr. Brewster:

I feel sure you will accept my humble apology for what might appear to be absolute neglect in acknowledging your letter and my delay in wiring my thanks for the support and your kindness which I received in your Great Cast Contest. During my recent illness my personal affairs were sadly neglected and I am now trying to catch up.

I want to thank you, first, for the lovely photograph reproduced on the cover of your January number; second, for your telling the Answer Man that you admired my taste in selecting the painting for my prize; third, for the treatment which your Magazine accorded me during my illness; fourth, your personal kindness in seeing that the painting reached me safely, and which I prize very highly, and last but not least, for your wonderful patience and tolerance in this matter. I am writing Mr. Tupper, the artist, congratulating him on this excellent piece of work.

I will be in New York for a few months, working over at the Triangle Fort Lee studio, and hope I will have the pleasure of seeing you before I return West.

With my most sincere wishes for a very successful and Happy New Year for yourself and the foremost picture magazine of today, the Motion Picture Magazine.

Sincerely, Mabel Normand

* from *Film Fun*, March 1916

"Elizabeth Sears, from an interview with Roscoe Arbuckle in his screening room, watching *He Did and He Didn't*)

...We watched the picture silently, until Mr. Arbuckle began to chuckle over a scene.

"We had an awful scrap over that," he said. "You see, sometimes some of us disagree on an essential point of the production, and we stop the picture and thrash it out right there. Miss Normand is a very charming little lady, but she has a mind of her own, all the same, and we had some argument over that. My idea was to mystify the audience right there -- not let 'em have an inkling of why Mabel gets her visitor into her room there, until they see the burglar hauled out from under the bed."

..."Miss Normand has a longing to play drama on the stage," he said, as he bade us good-by; "but I don't believe there is any finer mission on earth than just to make people laugh, do you?"

* from *Variety*, March 10, 1916

Mabel Normand Quits

Mabel Normand is reported to have quit the Keystone employ last Saturday. This in spite of an announcement from the Triangle offices that she had signed a new contract with the Keystone company. Miss Normand has confided to some of her friends that she will "never again" appear with the Keystone folks.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, March 11, 1916

Although Miss Mabel Normand has been away from her friends and associates of many years making comedies in the snow and ice in the east, her Keystone friends at the Edendale studio receive an almost daily letter from the popular leading woman. Miss Normand writes the east is wonderful. She says she has been fascinated by Broadway, but in between the lines the letters all sound as if the young woman would not be sorry when the director general, Mack Sennett, issued orders for Miss Normand to bring her company back to California.

Roscoe Arbuckle is directing Miss Normand while she is in the east, but is due to leave for the west with his company in about a month. On the way home they will stop and make comedies at nearly every important city.

* from *Variety*, March 17, 1916

Mabel Normand with Mutual

It was stated that Mabel Normand had signed a contract with the Mutual Film Corporation on Tuesday afternoon of this week.

Miss Normand was closeted with President Freuler for almost an hour late that afternoon, and is said to have affixed her signature to a contract. There is a possibility that she will work in the Chaplin releases.

* from *Variety*, March 24, 1916

Mabel Normand Remains

After having said she wouldn't, and negotiating elsewhere Mabel Normand affixed her signature to a new contract with the New York Motion Picture Corporation and, for the present, will continue as a member of the Keystone company at Fort Lee. Before many days her activities will take on a larger field. It is understood Miss Normand's salary under her new contract is \$1000 a week.

* from *Photoplay*, April 1916

Why Aren't We Killed

by Randolph Bartlett

"I didn't raise my wife to be a widow, but --" Roscoe Arbuckle paused, slanted a critical eye down a steep banister, twenty-five feet as the crow flies, and then added: "We are getting a little behind on Keystone releases, and the thing must be done."

It was no prop banister, though, as befitted the use to which it was dedicated, it was well propped. The general outstanding idea for which it had been erected in the Fort Lee studio was that Mr. Arbuckle should slide down it, take a flying leap as he neared the jewel post, grab a chandelier, swing around half a dozen times, say "Now I lay me," and drop. They didn't want to build the banister; it cost too much. They tried to get "locations," but the locators would take a look at Roscoe and then a fond look at the old home banister, and guess they would like to keep the family mansion intact yet a while. Besides there are few home grown banisters which would look kindly upon the idea of three hundred and eighty-five pounds of comedy doing an avalanche down their tender spines, so a special banister was built.

Roscoe looked down the banister over and under, and up and down, and decided that, upon the whole, it was a right pert banister. To make sure he exploded a few tons of nitro-glycerine under it, and as it did not budge, the chances were it might hold his weight, when said weight was going at the enthusiastic speed of a French shell on its way toward a German trench. So he tried a slide down it. Half way down something happened. Nobody knows what it was exactly, but the net result was a well-known comedian reclining gracefully upon the floor, with the most of his three hundred and eighty-five pounds sustained by a protesting neck. So he tried it again, and with similar results. You would hardly think a human neck could stand the pressure. But he tried it two or three more times, and always about the same point in the descent he lost his balance, doing an Annette Kellerman to the floor instead of a Wright Brothers to the chandelier. Finally he rubbed his neck and remarked to Ferris Hartman, who was standing sympathetically near:

"I'll guess we'll have to take it that way."

So when you see the Triangle-Keystone release "*He Did and He Didn't*," you will know what it means, to wit: He did survive, but he didn't take much interest in the fact.

You would have every right to expect that, after a man had been doing this sort of thing a few years, his friends would speak of him in subdued voices, and say how nice and green his grave was being kept. But for three years, Roscoe Arbuckle and Mabel Normand, "Fatty and Mabel," the team of a thousand laughs, have performed hair-raising feats for the purpose of giving the public comedy thrills, Roscoe the while, putting on weight, and Mabel just about holding her own, which makes for mirth and beauty in both cases. Yet when you ask them why it is they haven't been killed long ago, they disagree. It is the only point upon which there is not perfect comedy in the Keystone camp.

Arbuckle is very prosaic about it. "I am the only man my size and weight the New York Life Insurance Company ever issued a policy to," he says. "I am five feet, eleven inches tall, and weigh three hundred and eighty-five pounds, which is forty per cent more than the law allows. But I passed every physical test they put up to me."

In other words, A, in addition to standing for Arbuckle, stands for acrobatic, agile, athletic, able-bodied, alert, active, animated, alive, astir, and so on.

Mabel Normand lacks this positiveness, and not without cause.

"Why have you never been killed?" I asked her, with the utmost sincerity.

"Why haven't I? Why -- I have. I guess you don't read the Los Angeles papers."

"But it wasn't permanent."

"That didn't make it any better while it lasted," the fair Mabel insisted.

"How did it happen?"

"Roscoe sat on my head by mistake. I was unconscious for twelve days, and laid up for three months. Don't talk to me about being killed -- I've been through it," and Mabel's eyes took upon themselves that dreamy, distant gaze you read about. I think she was offering up a little prayer of thanks for being alive, as I know I always should, if Roscoe Arbuckle sat on my head and I lived to tell about it.

"But that was your only serious death in all your adventures, thus far?"

"Yes, but I just live along from day to day. I never make any plans. Nobody in the world lives up to the literal instruction, 'Take no thought for the morrow,' like I do. What's the use of making plans to go places or marry people, when like as not you will have to write a note saying, 'Excuse me. I did want to become your blushing bride today, but it's no go. I was killed yesterday doing a high dive into a tank of brickbats.'"

"Then you're always afraid you are going to be killed when you have a rough stunt to handle?"

"Afraid?" and Mabel was daintily angry. "Who said anything about being afraid? I'm usually in too big a hurry to be scared, but I just absolutely *know* I am going to be killed. When I come through alive I am so surprised that I feel quite sure it isn't myself at all, and want to be introduced to the woman that's hanging around in my clothes."

So there you have the Keystone policy of preparedness in a nutshell -- sort of filopena. Roscoe believes in strength and speed, and Mabel believes in anticipating the worst. It was to be expected that a quest of this sort would uncover a great assortment of lifesaving ideas, elaborate preparations for protecting the players from injury. You naturally look for a fully equipped Department of Accessories, so that when the ambulance corps telephones in a size 8 3/4 left hind leg, or a dark blue eye No. 1986, the order can be filled immediately. You expect to find a supply of ready made artificial limbs that would make a Soldier's Home seem like a gymnasium, and a Red Cross service beside which those adjacent to the European unpleasantness are mere training schools for the kindergarten. Not so. Here is the remarkable fact:

Notwithstanding all its rough work the Keystone company has a record for freedom from accident and sickness that is the envy of the craft. And Roscoe Arbuckle, who has borne the brunt of battle, never has suffered any injury that has kept him away from work five minutes. Here are a few of his more spectacular stunts:

In "Fatty and the Broadway Stars" he dropped through a skylight and fell about ten feet upon a table, with nothing to ease the percussion. In "The Village Scandal" he rolled down a roof and dropped fifteen feet into a trough of water. In "Fatty's Tintype Tangle" he walked along a bunch of telephone wires thirty feet above the ground, and dropped through the roof of a house, lighting upon a bed eighteen feet below. In "Fatty's Jonah Day" he dived seventy feet from the top of an electric light mast above a bridge in Hollenbeck Park, Los Angeles, into twelve feet of water.

The question that keeps arising constantly, is how can they tell it is going to work? How does Roscoe know, when he goes through a skylight, that he is going to land on the table, instead of stabbing out several ribs with its corner? When he rolls off the roof, how does he know he is going to land in the comparatively soft water and not mash out his young life on the edge of the trough? Are preparations made so that if any of these mishaps occur, there will not be a large enough opening for a stout comedian with Keystone?

"Why, we figure it out on paper, and if it looks as if it will work we do it. That's all there is to it. Now and then it doesn't work, and we either have to plan it a different way, or do it over again until we get it. Naturally I figure pretty carefully, because I don't want to roll off a roof more than seven or eight times just for a foot or two of film."

Then it isn't a question of tricks?"

Each one of Arbuckle's three hundred and eighty-five pounds got mad.

"Say -- if you, or anyone else, can show me a way that I can seem to fall through a roof, or into a river, and not do it, or even do it slow so that I can land gently, you can have just about half my salary. Our stuff cannot be faked. When people see it they know they are seeing real stunts. Of course, now and then we do a trick film, but everyone knows it is a trick when they see it -- there is no bunk about it. In fact, it was in one of these trick pictures that I took the longest chance of all.

"This was the picture called 'Fatty and Mabel's Simple Life.' In one scene I was backed against a tree by a runaway Ford. We had a man crouching down on the floor of the machine, working it from the pedals. All he had to guide him was a line on the ground. He would run the machine up to this line, at which time it pressed close against me; then he would back up a few feet and run into me again. It gave the impression that the machine was acting like a goat. Well, of course no one believed that the car was doing this without some sort of control, so it was a trick picture and yet it wasn't. But if that man ever had gone past the line I surely would have had an attack of indigestion.

"No, the only times I have been injured in the least, is when I have loafed on the job. A child or a drunk can fall all over itself and never be hurt. It is because they simply let go and flop. The same rule works with me. If I go right after the stuff, we get a real picture and I don't get a scratch. If I happen to be lazy, we usually have to do the scene over again, and I get a few bruises as a result."

Excepting for her water exploits, the secret of Miss Normand's immunity from injury is that with her, things are only apparently going to happen, and disaster is averted. The public would not stand for pictures where so pretty a girl was slammed around like a medicine ball. Yet her adventures have been hair-raising, and have varied from aviation and auto racing to deep-sea diving. Notwithstanding her remark that she is positive that each film will be her last, she is game clear through, and certainly her pictures suggest no trepidation. After all the difference in the viewpoint of these two Keystoneers is easy to understand, viz.: If anything hits Mabel Normand, she is so little that it hits her where she lives. But --

If anything hits Roscoe Arbuckle, the news has so far to go that he does not know about it until it is all healed up.

* from *Picture Play*, April 1916

Behind The Scenes With Fatty And Mabel ¹⁴⁴

by Wil Rex

One of the most wonderful places you can find any where is Fort Lee, that magic New Jersey town across the Hudson from New York City, where murders, robberies and Indian chases take place while the police force -- his name is Pat -- leans yawningly, against a convenient lamp-post. The home of the first Keystone comedy, and now because of the crowded studios of California, the "fun factory" of Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand, and their gang of devil-may-care comedians.

A better place to spend a day for inspiration, perspiration, and real, unvarnished hard work would be impossible to find. So I was commissioned to have my alarm clock in working order.

We met at the ferryhouses early in the morning, and luck was with us. A racing motor came tearing up, spitting oil and smoke. Almost hidden behind a huge steering wheel was Mabel Normand, the idol of the film fans. Immediately we renewed our acquaintance of years back -- who wouldn't. And the lady was kind enough to ask us to ride with her.

Reaching the Jersey side of the river our adventures began. Every one who motors knows that Fort Lee is one of the most dangerous spots in the East. Mabel started up this young mountain at full speed, but the noble car got tired before we reached the top. Slowly, but surely, it was stopping. I looked around nervously, and my heart rose when I spied the water far, far below.

"Maybe, I'd better walk?" I suggested non-chalantly. "The car might go easier if I get off."

Mabel just looked at me and laughed.

"Oh, this is nothing," she said lightly.

"Only yesterday, my machine backed all the way down, and if it wasn't for the ferryhouse, I would have been doing some water stuff without a camera in sight."

"Cheerful!" I remarked, and stealthily started for the ground, but returned to my seat meekly when I heard Mabel laugh and murmur.

"'Fraid cat!"

Strange as it may seem, we reached the Keystone-Triangle Studios -- one of the largest glass-enclosed film factories in the East -- without further excitement. Something was bound to happen though. Entering the yard we barely escaped Al St. John, "The Bouncing Boy of the Films," into the next country. By a miraculous leap, he jumped on the radiator, and rode away to the garage with us. Keystone should employ one camera to do nothing but follow Miss Normand around.

The studio was bristling with activity. Roscoe Arbuckle, the elephantine author-actor-director, was superintending the construction of a set, aided by Ferris Hartmann, his co-worker, and a dozen prop men; Elgin Lessley, the intrepid camera man, who has the reputation of turning out the clearest films of any Keystone crank turner, was loading his magazines. A dozen rough and ready comedians were practicing falls down a stairway. The heavy eight director turned and saw us.

"Oh, Miss Normand, get ready for the hall scenes please."

"Very well, Roscoe and -- very good!"

The dainty little comedienne going to her dressing room, I strolled over to the busy throng and exchanged greetings with Arbuckle.

"How are you getting along with your new picture?" I asked.

"Slow, but sure," was the reply. "It's a new theme, and I want to go at it easily. I'm not trying to be a 'high brow,' or anything like that, but I am going to cut an awful lot of the slapstick out hereafter. If any one gets kicked, or pie thrown in his face, there's going to be a reason for it."

"How about that staircase?" I queried. "That looks as though something exciting was going to happen."

"Oh, nothing much," he answered.

"St. John and I are going to fall down it, but that's about all. Here, I'll show you," and I snapped the picture as he did.

"Oh, it's great to be a comedian -- if there's a hospital handy!"

As we stood talking I heard an excited altercation in French and German with an occasional word in good old U.S.A. I looked frightened, but Arbuckle only laughed.

"Don't get worried," he said. "That noise is only the favorite indoor pastime of Miss Normand's maids. One is a loyal French girl, and the other was imported from the banks of the Rhine. Everything went nicely until the excitement started in Europe. Then things happened. The two maids considered themselves envoys to carry the fight on this side, and Mabel hasn't yet been able to change their opinions."

As we spoke, a pistol shot rang out.

"Do they shoot, too?" I inquired quickly.

Again Arbuckle laughed. "Oh that's only St. John shooting apples off Joe Bordeaux's head. I'm going to pull that stunt in my next film!"

¹⁴⁴ This interview took place during the shooting of *He Did and He Didn't*.

Miss Normand presently came out, her hair in beautiful curls, crowned with a dainty boudoir cap the lights were turned on, Lessley got his camera into position and Mabel and Fatty took their places.

"Now, Mabel," instructed the director, "you start running down the steps, then look over the banister, and start to fall. I'll rush down and catch you before you go over. Let's try it once."

Then to Ferris Hartman: "How does it sound to you -- O.K.?" His co-worker nodded. "All right," said Arbuckle to Lessley, and the camera turned.

Miss Normand "registered" surprise at the top of the stairs, and then started running down. Suddenly she stopped and looked over the railing. She leaned too far, and started to slide down the banister. At this moment, Arbuckle started after her, and caught her on the way down. The scene was ended, and the players, directors and camera men got together and talked it over. Mabel had some suggestions to make -- she's quit a director herself you know. Among other pictures, she produced "Caught in a Cabaret" with Charlie Chaplin.

Once more the scene was taken, but something went wrong, and Arbuckle slipped all the way down, head first. Mabel looked on as though she thought her side partner had broken his neck, but Arbuckle scrambled up, and grunting said: "Try it again." Time and again the same scene was filmed until it suited all present. "How many times do you take the same scene?" I asked the director.

"Till I can't do any better," he answered. "Often I use 10 or 15 thousand feet of film for a two reel production. The average Keystone costs nearly 20,000 dollars, you know and we've got to do our best. Generally, I take a month or more to produce a picture that runs less than thirty minutes on screen.

"In one of my films, 'Fickle Fatty's Fall,' I spent just one week getting the kitchen scenes I was in alone. I used over ten thousand feet of film just for that. In one part of the play, I had to toss a pancake up and catch it behind my back. I started nine o'clock in the morning, did it on first rehearsal, then started the camera and didn't get it till four-thirty! I'd hate to tell you how long it took me to catch the plate behind my back in 'The Village Scandal!' I seldom rehearse since then."

Arbuckle called to St. John for a scene. He was to hang from a chandelier and kick down a few policemen who were on his trail. Oh, no, no rough stuff in this picture -- not at all! The very first time they rehearsed it, a little English chap, playing a cop, got in the way of St. John's feet, and had his jaw damaged more or less. Two minutes later, Lloyd Peddrick, an old friend of Mack Sennett's broke his nose in a scene in which he was playing a butler.

"Gee you got your face in the way!" was the only comment from Fatty.

Later I learned that there is not a member of the Keystone Company who hasn't broken. Some of them retire after one picture.

By this time luncheon was ready.

"Now that we have a little leisure," I asked Arbuckle, "how about telling me some of your career. It ought to make interesting reading.

"Nothing to it at all," he answered; "but I'll let you have it: twenty-eight years ago I was born in a little two-by-twice town in Kansas. They tell me my weight at birth was 16 pounds and a half. Maybe it was so -- I have to take their word for it, anyway.

"My first experience on the stage was in San Jose, California, in 1904, when I acted as a super on the stage at the request of a hypnotist, who wanted subjects to demonstrate his hypnotic powers. I thought that I made a hit, and decided to take a chance myself. My first venture after this was a ballyhoo with a carnival company, which lasted less than a month.

"My next experience on the stage was a little different. It was singing illustrated songs in San Jose. This job lasted a year, and then I went to Frisco doing the same stunt. From there, I worked all through the Northwest. It was here that I met Leon Errol, the comedian, who persuaded me that I had a voice, ability, and that I would make a good actor. It was he who gave me my first part, and put on my first make-up.

"I then traveled all through the West with a singing act, working anything from single to quartet. I then put together another act in which I sang and danced. It was in Long Beach that I made my first hit, and it was also there that I met and married Minta Durfee. Naturally, I am still very fond of the town.

"Since 1908, I have made Los Angeles my headquarters, working from there, taking out little troupes into Arizona and Texas with some success. I worked in Ferris Hartmann's Opera Company in 1912; Mr. Hartmann is now associated with me in the production of Keystone comedies, you know. Late in 1912, I left his company for a tour of the Orient, which was a big success. I visited Honolulu, Japan, China, Philippines, and Siam, and returned to Los Angeles the last February, 1913.

"It was while rehearsing an act for my wife and myself that some one told me that Fred Mace was leaving the Keystone Company, and that there was a good opening. I went and interviewed Mack Sennett, who immediately put me on salary. My first picture was 'The Gangsters.'

"For the past two years, I have been directing my own pictures, and I write most of them. It keeps me rather busy.

"Oh, and by the way, do you know who one of my best actors is? No? Well, I'll tell you -- it's my dog -- you've probably seen him in my pictures."

Before luncheon was finished, visitors began strolling in from the surrounding studios. Teddy Sampson dropped in from the World, Helen Gardner from Universal, Douglas Fairbanks from Fine Arts, and dozens of other lesser lights. It was a merry crowd withal, no professional jealousy, but just good-humored jollyng one another along. The moving-picture people are certainly a cheerful devil-may-care aggregation. Doug Fairbanks gave a little impromptu speech, Teddy Sampson imitated her well-known hubby, Ford Sterling and Mabel Normand showed us how Theda Bara acts.

After the midday meal, Arbuckle and Lessley decided the sun was right for exterior scenes, and away we all went in motors. Reaching the location, Al St. John practiced a couple of handsprings and then, when the camera was set up, took a half-a-dozen headfirst dives in a window, and the same number out of it. It's a wonder that energetic youth doesn't break his neck! That was all to be done outside, and we returned to the studio, badly damaging the Fort Lee speed laws.

The next scene was to be St. John coming in the window. Nonchalantly he popped in turned a somersault over a chair, another over a table, and then took a headlong dive over a sideboard.

"Oh, that's nothing," he yawned, in reply to a question from me. "You ought to see some of the stuff I do out on the coast! I've been doing this kind of stunt all my life. First I was a minstrel man, then a trick bicycle rider, then a clown, then in a musical show with Roscoe, and for the past two years I have played under his direction at Keystone. He's my uncle, you know," he added proudly.

Next, some scenes were taken in a bedroom set. Poor Arbuckle certainly bruised himself up! He and Mabel got on their hands and knees and crawled around the floor looking for Fatty's collar button. First Arbuckle banged his head on an open bureau drawer. Then in a rage, he slammed the drawer shut, and got his finger caught in it. I could see that he really hurt himself. A servant was then sent in the scene, and joined the hunt. Time and again his head and Arbuckle's would come together with a crash. Mabel keeping at a safe distance. Finally, Fatty kicked the servant headfirst into a bureau. The unfortunate fellow hit it so hard that he pushed it against the scenery, nearly knocking it over.

"Retake," said Arbuckle to the camera man.

"Amica [sic]," said the servant to a prop boy.

And thus it went all day long. First one, then another, would work me up to a point where I almost ran for an ambulance. The recruits, who joined the company in the East, resembled nothing more than a trenchful of wounded soldiers. The veteran from California just stood on the side lines and laughed. Getting half killed is second nature to them now. Even little Mabel is not immune from injury. Just before coming to Fort Lee, she was released from the hospital, where she had been confined for over a month. She had brain fever and a few other sicknesses and injuries, which goes to prove that no matter how hard your head may be, a brick wall is harder!

The last scene was a free-for-all pistol fight, in which Fatty and Mabel disposed of Al St. John and Joe Bordeaux. Then it was a case of "nothing to do till to-morrow." That is what we thought, but later learned was wrong.

I went in Arbuckle's dressing room, as he removed his make-up.

"Where do you get your ideas from, anyway?" I asked in wonder.

"Easy!" he laughed. "I get a plot in my head, gather up the company and start out. As we go along, fresh ideas pop out, and we all talk it over. I certainly have a clever crowd working with me. Mabel alone, is good for a dozen new suggestions in every picture. And the others aren't far behind, I take advice from everyone. It's a wise man who realizes that there are others who know as much, if not more than he does himself. Some of my greatest stuff comes from the supposed dull brains of 'supers'."

Looking through the door, I spied Mabel all dressed up in velvet and furs. I leaned over to a camera man and told him I wanted an unusual picture of Mabel -- one where she looked sad -- then I went over to where she stood.

"Want to go for a ride?" she called.

The long, skinny fingers of fear clutched my heart, but bravely I answered "Sure!" She sent some one for her car, and I helped her up on a window seat, and asked her to tell me the history of her life while waiting for the buzz wagon. I saw my camera man come up quietly, but paid no attention to him. Later, I found that he had taken the picture I asked for -- while Mabel was talking to me.

"I was born in New York," she said, "and nearly all my life, it seems has been spent in moving picture studios. First, I was with the Vitagraph, then played for Mr. Griffith at the Biograph Company, and now I'm with the Keystone. You know, I am one of the original Keystone players. Four years ago, Mack Sennett broke away from the Biograph, and took Ford Sterling, Fred Mace, and myself with him. The four of us organized the Keystone film company.

"At first it was a hard struggle. Money was scarce, and it was a long time before we were sure of our paycheck at the end of the week. Our first picture was produced right here in Fort Lee, but we soon went west. This is my first trip back to good old New York in four years, that is, with the exception of a few days a year or two ago, when my mother was very ill. For a long time, I directed all the pictures I played in, the best known of which are the Chaplin series. Lately, however, I have given up that end of the game, finding enough to do with acting."

That was all the information this modest little actress would give on her great life. I'll add something that Miss Normand omitted, and say that she is the most popular comedienne in the world, and also the best. She is remarkably pretty, more charming off the screen than on, if that is possible, and as lovely as she is pretty. She is the champion woman swimmer and diver of the Pacific Coast, and I look to see her capture many trophies East this coming summer.

She is athletic to a degree, and is fond of all outdoor sports, on many of which she excels her male competitors.

Miss Normand's car was brought to the door, and I happened in after bidding "Good by!" to Arbuckle and his various assistants.

"Going to the big city?" I queried, looking for a nice ride all the way home.

"Oh dear no!" she said. "I'll take you to the ferry, but I've got to hurry back to the studio to see the scenes we took to-day run off. You know Roscoe never leaves the place until he O.K.'s or N.G.'s the day's work, and I always look it over with him. It keeps us busy."

A little more talk, and the ferry was reached. "Too bad you can't come across the river with me," I said as I was about to leave the pretty little star.

"We might go right over, without the ferry, if this car was a --" Mabel started, but I silenced her in time. This isn't an automobile -- joke book.

* from *Motography*, April 15, 1916

A brand-new field of motion picture activity, it is announced, is to be opened to Mabel Normand by the Triangle interest, with whom she has just signed a new contract. She is to be a star in comedy-drama, with a director of her own, whose mission will be to select plays for her that will be along the lines of "Peggy," the story of rustic life in Scotland in which Billie Burke scored such a pronounced success.

Three reasons are given for this move -- first, that Miss Normand's dramatic abilities have burst the bounds of Keystone comedy; second, that she is too good a comedienne to be allowed to get away from that field entirely; third, she has a personal following of movie fans who will be eager to see her in something affording more scope for her talents than the uproarious productions which have given fame to the name of Mack Sennett.

It is true of Miss Normand that despite her fun-making abilities, and her willingness to risk her life in the startling stunts of the Keystone studios, there has always been a distinct appeal in her work, apart from either comedy or thrill. In the most grotesque situations she has had a way of ingratiating herself into the sympathies of her audiences, and of evoking heart interest as well as laughter. There has always been drama in her comedy, and it seems safe to assume there will always be comedy in her drama.

Whether Miss Normand will make her first picture, in the unique field, in the east or on the coast has not yet been announced. She is now in New York enjoying a vacation from strenuous Keystone activities.

* from *Arcata Union* (California), August 12, 1916

[from a biography of serial star Helen Holmes] "While on a trip to Los Angeles some five years ago, Miss Holmes¹⁴⁵ met Mabel Normand, who was at that time working with the Keystone Company and who later was with Charley Chaplin. Having known her previously in Chicago, Miss Normand prevailed upon her to join the Keystone Company, with whom she remained a couple of months. She then went with the Kalem company, in which Mr. McGowan was the director and while working in this company, she won fame in her 'Hazards of Helen' pictures and also a husband, the director and the movie queen joining forces for a life partnership."

* from *Variety*, April 14, 1916

Mabel Normand Joins Ince

Mabel Normand, accompanied by Teddy Sampson, left this week for Culver City, where she will take up her work with John Ince thereby finally officially verifying the reports in *Variety* from time to time that she would retire from association with Keystone.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, April 22, 1916

Mabel Normand, erstwhile Keystone comedienne, but now an aspiring dramatic star, arrived in Los Angeles this week to begin her new duties as an artiste under the supervision of Thomas H. Ince. She went immediately to her home in Hollywood, and is now awaiting word from Ince to start work before the camera in her first vehicle for the Triangle. What is particularly important in connection with Miss Normand's new venture is the fact that she will not do her work at either the Culver City or Inceville plant of the New York Motion Picture Corporation, but will have a studio of her own. This is a four-acre tract midway between Los Angeles and Hollywood, on which property a studio is now in course of erection. Here Miss Normand will preside as queen over a large company of players, who will be used as her permanent supporting cast in each of the plays in which she will appear. She will have her own director, who, although not yet named, will have immediate charge of the directorial end of her work. Each play will be made under the personal supervision of Ince and be released as a Triangle-Kay Bee subject. What story in which Miss Normand will make her first appearance as an Ince luminary has not been announced, but rumors are to the effect that the scenario is being prepared by J. G. Hawks of the Ince staff writers.

* from *Photoplay*, May 1916

Mabel Normand's contract with Keystone has expired and it is said she will not sign with that company.

* from *Film Fun*, May 1916

They Will Not Remain In Comedy

A happy little creature, with the cunningest poke bonnet you ever saw framing her piquant face, opened her bid dark eyes to their widest extent and made the announcement she had left Keystone comedies.

The poke bonnet was decorated with a bit of blue ribbon and a rose set here and there about the crown and was a pretty creation. But not any prettier than the face it surrounded. And not half as startling as her announcement.

You've seen the picture on the other side of the page,¹⁴⁶ so you know right well that we are talking about Mabel Normand. Yes, sir, Mabel has deserted the ranks of the comedienues. Walked right out on us.

It isn't that she likes comedy less, but that she liked drama more. It does seem a shame that as soon as we have discovered a gay little comedienne that can turn out fun on the film just exactly to suit us, she should get the drama bee in her pretty poke bonnet and begin to study the methods of Duse and Bernhardt.

Still, Miss Normand insists that she has not deserted the comedy field. She points out that she has always wanted to do more serious work -- in comedy-drama, for instance. She wants to be a trifle more serious and dignified than they have allowed her to be in the Keystone comedies. She says comedy does not altogether consist of falling downstairs and throwing custard pies, and she believes that she can be just as funny in more dignified situations.

The point is that Mabel Normand is tired of slapstick. She feels that she is capable of better things. Her directors think so, too, for she has a special director now, who is selecting plays for her. Her ability in drama was spotted a long time ago, but she was so popular as a Keystone comedienne that they were anxious to keep her as long as they could.

But Miss Normand got as far as New York and milled around some with the bunch, and then kicked right over the traces. She landed right in the spotlight as a star in her own right, and if her director is to be believed, this piquant little comedienne is going to be a scream.

* from *Motography*, May 6, 1916

Mabel Normand, the former Keystone comedienne, is ready to start her new work as an aspiring dramatic star with Triangle. Miss Normand is to have her own studio, a four-acre tract midway between Los Angeles and Hollywood, and will have her own company of players who will be used as her permanent supporting cast in each of the plays in which she will appear. The director for Miss Normand has not yet been named. Each player will be under the personal supervision of Ince and will be released as a Triangle-Kay Bee subject.

¹⁴⁵ Helen Holmes.

¹⁴⁶ Caption to picture referred to reads: "'Beg pardon?" said Mabel Normand. "Yes, I've left Keystone."'

* from *Los Angeles Times*, May 9, 1916

" Grace Kingsley

Thumbnail Sketches: Mabel Normand: Champagne at a wake; red roses in the lettuce patch.

* from *Photoplayers Weekly*, May 20, 1916

With a story just as attractive as the little star herself, Miss Mabel Normand and her own company of players began rehearsals last week. Although Miss Normand has her own studio, her relations with the Keystone Film Company, where she was featured for so many years, are very close, the rehearsals being held on the old stage where Miss Mabel once upon a time worked with hose, bomb, and pie. Mack Sennett and Hampton Del Ruth lent their aid at the first rehearsals, just as in the past.

"I am more than delighted with everything," Miss Normand said when asked if she would say a word about her future plans. "I am sure I have the best equipped studio for its size in the country. I am more than satisfied with the first story selected. I feel sure I have regained my old good health again, and now I am anxious to hear Mr. Young say 'camera' and begin work again."

* from *Motography*, May 20, 1916

Never again will "Keystone" Mabel Normand go riding on a motorcycle with Charlie Chaplin, who didn't know how to manage the thing.

Never again will she roll down a hill in a barrel; be dragged through a muddy lake containing rubbish and broken glass; walk along the skyline of a hill with a goat following her; be tied to a rock in the ocean with the surf pounding over her; ride a wild horse part way over a cliff before deciding to turn back.

Worshippers before the perpendicular stage will not again see Miss Normand leap from the roof of one house to another before a net is placed in the alley between, or fall from the window of a blazing building.

In brief, Mabel Normand, the dark-eyed, slender little comedienne who, in Keystone comedies, has been responsible for millions of laughs in theaters all over the world, is through risking her neck in the noble cause of motion picture art.

The charm of personality, the spirit of fun and mischief, the gayety of manner which won for "Keystone Mabel" so many enthusiastic friends, is to have a new setting, in a new sort of comedies which will delight her old admirers and win her many new ones.

Incidentally, the new pictures will not be so dangerous to work in. The leading lady will be fairly certain, when she begins one, that she will not be carried to a hospital before the play is completed.

"Keystone comedies are fun to watch," said Miss Normand, who, about to begin her new work, felt in a reminiscent mood, "but, believe me, making them is a serious affair. It was no laughing matter for me. I was always thinking of my role, even in the funniest play. It was hard work, too, running at top speed in the hot sunshine, falling flat, rolling down hill in a barrel, even dragging goats around by the horns!" Mabel looked quite sorry for herself for just one minute; then she laughed. "I played with a goat once; who was temperamental, I think.

"He was supposed to follow me, but he simply refused. They whipped him, but he still balked. They shoved him with poles, but the poles showed in the picture. Then I thought of a wire, and they wired me and the goat together, tied one end around the goat's horns, the other around my waist. And four times I dragged that stubborn animal along the skyline of a hill before the picture was just right. I felt sorry for myself, working so hard.

"Then there was the time they dragged me through a lake. It was really sort of a mud hole, which the city was to fill, but it gave the director an idea for a comedy. We went and made it and it was a funny picture,¹⁴⁷ but I was sick for several weeks after, because I swallowed some of the lake water."

However, the life of a Keystoner is not without its compensation in fun. Miss Normand couldn't tell which comedy she thought most humorous on the screen, but she was not for a moment in doubt about the "most fun she ever had in pictures."

"Working with Raymond Hitchcock in 'My Valet' made up for all the hardships. I think I laughed straight through the 'water stuff.' Fred Mace was the villain. He took me out to a rock in the sea and tied me there. But he was so afraid of the water that he was in terror the whole time, I believe. And at last the current was so strong it swept him away, and we all had to turn in and rescue the frightened 'villyan.'

Like many other adventurers, Miss Normand has a pet superstition to which she has clung through all her hazards and which she is bringing into her new work. It concerns the number thirteen.

"I always like to have the number thirteen prominent in some way when I begin new things. I signed my new contract on the thirteenth of the month, and that is a good beginning for me."

Miss Normand is to be an "extra special" player under the Kay-Bee label. A special studio is being built for her on a four-acre tract between Hollywood and Los Angeles, and she will have her own company of stock players as regular support.

She will have her own director, but each of her pictures will be made under the close supervision of Thomas H. Ince. Her first play has been written for her by J. G. Hawks. The title of the story has not been made public as yet, but it will afford Miss Normand a light comedy. In her new plays the star will have an opportunity for acting and character drawing.

And one thing is certain: there will be plenty of fun and "pep" and in Mabel Normand's plays.

* from *Moving Picture World*, May 27, 1916

Mabel Normand, the popular Triangle star, was the guest of honor at the Pals Club last Saturday. She was welcomed by a host of Los Angeles friends, and a notable program had been arranged for the evening.

¹⁴⁷ *A Muddy Romance* (1913)

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, May 28, 1916

Mabel Normand with her own company of players and in her own studio began actual work on her initial production¹⁴⁸ this week. This will be a four-reel feature released on the Triangle Program under the name of the Mabel Normand Feature Film Company. Eight such features are planned for as the average yearly output. They will all be comedy dramas, Miss Normand will be directed by James Young, formerly director of Clara Kimball Young and more recently a director at the Lasky studio, where he produced two pictures, one for Mae Murray and the other for Blanche Sweet. Lewis J. Cody, formerly of the Selig Company, will play opposite Miss Normand in her first picture. The general supervision of the work of the new studio is being looked after by the Keystone heads, who will lend their aid and advice at all necessary times. Hampton Del Ruth, the Keystone scenario editor, will act in like capacity for Miss Normand. Mack Sennett will accord to Mr. Young his assistance at all times.

* from *Photoplay*, June 1916

No more slapstick, flour-barrel, custard-pie, aeroplane, water stuff comedy for Mabel Normand, who has been frolicking in Keystone laugh provokers ever since there was a Keystone. Miss Normand deserted her old screen pal, "Fatty" Arbuckle, in New York, and left for Los Angeles with a new Triangle contract which recognizes her desire to play light dramatic roles. It has not been determined at the time of her departure for the Coast whether Miss Normand was to make her debut into the new field under the auspices of Thomas H. Ince, or her former director, Mack Sennett.

* from *Motography*, June 3, 1916

Mabel Normand and her own company of players have begun rehearsals on the first production to be released by the Mabel Normand Feature Film Company. This will be in four reels and the plan is to make eight releases of this length during the year. Miss Normand has not cut away entirely from the Keystone studios, as James Young, who will direct the star, and [Hampton] Del Ruth are lending their aid as in the past. The only real difference is in the play, which is a straight comedy-drama. In it the dramatic situations are strong, while the opportunities for comedy are unlimited.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, June 18, 1916

" Edward Vincent

James Young is no longer the director of Mabel Normand. Mr. Young directed a few scenes for the former Keystoneer and it seemed impossible for the two to get along, so Mr. Young, like the courteous gentleman he is, withdrew. He has been succeeded by J. Farrell McDonald, late of the American Woman Film Company, and for a long time with the Biograph Company. He will be assisted by A. Gillstrom [Arvid Gillstrom] of the Keystone forces, and Mr. Sennett will continue as the general supervising director. Miss Normand's initial comedy-dramatic picture under her own name will be released about the first of August.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, June 25, 1916

Mabel Normand's second dramatic feature for the Triangle will be a motion picture version of J. M. Barrie's "The Little Minister." The Mabel Normand Company has purchased the rights to all of the Barrie stories.

* from *New York Clipper*, July 1, 1916

MAE MARSH, the Triangle star, gave a large party last week at her palatial California home in honor of the announced marriage of Rose Richter to James Smith, the latter being in charge of the Fine Arts assembling department. All of the guests, which included about sixty members of the Fine Arts studio, presented the young couple with elaborate and useful gifts. In charge of the shower was D. W. Griffith. Dance music was supplied by a six piece orchestra, and between dances refreshments were served by the hostess, her sister, Margaret and her mother. Among those present at the Marsh party were: The Gish Sisters, Robert Harron, Fay Tincher, Wilfred Lucas, Seena Owen, Eugene Pallette, Constance Talmadge, Chester Withey, Mary O'Connor, W. C. Cabanne, Hetty Gray Baker, Lloyd Ingraham, Kate Bruce, Tod Browning, Mabel Normand, Edward Dillon, Loyola O'Connor and Milliard Webb, and, of course, Rose Richter and James Smith, in whose honor the party was given by Miss Marsh.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, July 2, 1916

If the Mabel Normand Company has bought the rights of Barrie's novels, as published last week, Alf Hayman, of the Charles Frohman Company knows nothing of it. The Charles Frohman Company controls the stage rights of Barrie's works.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, July 16, 1916

" E. V. Durling

After many difficulties, Mabel Normand is now making rapid progress on the production of her new picture and will soon begin another here instead of going to New York as she had planned. Dick Jones, formerly of the Keystone forces, is directing, and seems to have produced the desired harmony. The scenario for the initial feature was written by Anita Loos, which fact is enough to insure its being a worth-while story.

* from "Daily Talks by Mary Pickford," (syndicated column), July 1916

PERSONALITIES I HAVE MET.

Mabel Normand

Mabel Normand had been with the Vitagraph company, playing in pictures, but she came over one summer afternoon to visit our old Biograph studio, when Mr. Griffith was the presiding genius. I was the first one to get a peek

¹⁴⁸ Mickey.

at her as she sat in the office waiting to see him, and I hurried out to the studio stage to tell him that another lovely girl was waiting in his office.

"What is her type?" Mr. Griffith asked me. "Is she a blonde?"

"No," I replied, feeling that in a sense I was paying her a great compliment, "she's just the opposite. She has jet black, shiny hair, great big brown eyes and eye lashes two inches long!"

"Are you sure they are two inches long?" Mr. Griffith asked me and laughed. "It seems to me you are hanging on to the truth by an eye-lash!"

"Well," I was forced to admit "perhaps they aren't quite two inches long – but – but – they're exceptional."

"Very well," Mr. Griffith replied, "I shall have to go and interview this remarkable, eyelashed young lady."

And let me tell you it was only 10 minutes after her first interview that Miss Normand was engaged to play leads and heavies in the Biograph studio.

One of the first pictures in which we played together was the Mender of Nets, but because she was so dark she was soon cast for all the deep-dyed villainesses. One day she confided to me that she would like to be a comedian, but we laughed at her, telling her that because of her flashing black eyes and jet black hair she was destined to be a heavy woman.

But it was not long after that she did have her opportunity and her wonderful sense of humor soon heralded her as one of the finished products of laughter-provoking comedy. From the Biograph studio she went to the Keystone, and there she became known as the daring, dashing Keystone girl.

As the months drifted into years, no one seemed to remember Mabel Normand as a heavy-dramatic artist, but thought of her only as the laughing, happy-go-lucky, dare-devil Mabel of the boisterous Keystone comedies.

When she came to the Biograph studio we never suspected that that this demure little maiden, who used to peer at us shyly, with great dark eyes, would ever thrill us by her daring feats on the screen. There was no cliff so high that Mabel was afraid of it, no water so deep that she would not dive into it, no bucking bronco too wild for her to ride; as for dodging Keystone pies, there was no one ever on the screen who could do it more gracefully and with as much poise as Mabel.

Last summer I went to visit her in her beautiful little bungalow in Hollywood, and found it one of the most artistic little precede-on-the-top-of-a-hill homes I have ever seen. The Japanese butler opened the door and I was ushered into an exquisite little living-room with a cool, inviting vine-covered porch adjoining it. Her environment had changed, but not Mabel. She is just the same frank generous, outspoken girl as when she first came to the Biograph, very feminine, and with an extravagant love for beautiful, dainty clothes.

"Well, Mabel," I remarked, "you have realized your dream at last."

"Being one of the world's greatest comedians," I replied. "Don't you remember those in those old Biograph days when you were doing the hissing villainesses, how you longed to play in comedy?"

And then she confessed that now she had reached the very pinnacle of the ladder of success, and she wanted to lay aside the laurels and make the world, which was always ready to laugh at her, weep with her.

Yes, that is the truth; Mabel Normand is going to play not only straight drama but dramatic drama. In fact, she is already at work on Barrie's Little Minister. And in one great respect Miss Normand will have the advantage over other artists – she knows that she can make her audience laugh, and the tear that follows on the heels of laughter is the tear that always comes straight from the heart.

[signed] Mary Pickford.

* from *Moving Picture World*, August 5, 1916

Tod Browning, director for the Triangle-Fine Arts Company, on July 12 was tendered a surprise party by his friends at the Reiter Arms Apartments, Hollywood. The affair was given in honor of Browning's twenty-third birthday.

Miss Alice Wilson had charge of the arrangements. Browning was taken to the downtown district for dinner. One of the members of the party soon after the dinner pleaded a severe headache and they all adjourned to the Reiter Arms, where Browning was met by the three hundred guests who were invited to the affair, including notable film people from the various studios in the motion picture colony. Charles Murray, the Keystone comedian, acted as master of ceremonies, and welcomed Browning home with a traditional Keystone bit of comedy.

A buffet luncheon was served in the Reiter Arms ballroom, and the evening was spent in dancing.

Among the guests were Mr. and Mrs. Edward Dillon, Chet Withey, Mabel Normand, Fay Tincher, Dorothy Gish, Robert Harron, Wallace Reid, Dorothy, Davenport, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Ingraham, J. C. Epping, Ruth Stonehouse, Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Cabanne, Bessie Love, Mae and Marguerite Marsh, Mrs. Marsh, Mary H. O'Connor, Hettie Gray Baker, Constance Talmadge, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Clifton, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Long, Bernard McConville, Roy Somerville, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Wilson and others. Hettie Gray Baker, of the scenario department of the Fine Arts Company, celebrated her birthday at the same time.

Eddie Dillon presented Browning with a sponge cake containing twenty-three red peppermint candies, arranged so as to form Browning's initials.

* from *New York Clipper*, August 5, 1916

Mabel Normand, on Saturday last, contributed as exclusive release of one of her comedy pictures to the boys at the border. The picture was made hurriedly, just as soon as actual camp was begun. Miss Normand puzzled her brain in an effort to decide upon what to send them. Keystone sent cigars and chewing gum and candy and magazines, but the boys all miss "the movies," and Mabel posed and worked at odd moments during all the time that she was not actually busy on her first feature release, which is to be a seven reeler -- the biggest one that Mabel has ever done.

The scenario of the one reel picture that has been sent to the soldier boys¹⁴⁹ is a broad comedy, and in it Mabel is recruiting. She has a chance to masquerade as a soldier, and later as an officer -- a little fellow -- and then as her own self she finds recruiting easier. This is not for sale, and will not be released in any way except free, with Mabel's compliments. Also with her compliments went projecting machines. Others will follow -- also other scenarios, when odd moments, enough have occurred at the Mabel Normand studio, sufficient to allow the time of making.

* from *Arcata Union* (Arcata, CA), August 12, 1916

...While on a trip to Los Angeles some five years ago, Miss (Helen) Holmes met Mabel Normand, who was at that time working with the Keystone Company and who later was with Charley [sic] Chaplin. Having known her previously in Chicago, Miss Normand prevailed upon her to join the Keystone Company, with whom she remained a couple of months. She then went with the Kalem Company, in which Mr. McGowan was the director and while working in this company, she won fame in her "Hazards of Helen" pictures...

* from *Racine Journal-News*, August 14, 1916

New Notes from Movieland

by Daisy Dean

Mabel Normand bumb [sic] of originality has prompted a unique joy giver for the soldiers at the front. The conventional cigarets [sic] and chewing gum and magazines didn't appeal to her as discomfort alleviators, so she cast about for something different. She discovered it. "It" is a one-real comedy limited edition, made by Mabel herself in the spare time between scenes on her feature picture. Mabel is recruiting, masquerading first as a soldier and then as an officer, and ending up by being just Mabel herself. This picture is not for sale. No one gets it, unless he gets it for nothing with Miss Normand's compliments. With the picture to the border she sent the projecting machines and promises of more pictures.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, August 25, 1916

DR. RAYMOND A. SWETT ARRESTED

MABEL NORMAND HIS ACCUSER

Mabel Normand, the noted film actress caused the arrest last night of Raymond A. Swett of 228 North Wilton Place on a charge of attempted blackmail. Swett was trapped in her apartments by two city detectives who had been gathering evidence against him for several weeks following a complaint made to Chief of Police Snively by Miss Normand. The detectives charge Dr. Swett with attempting to extort \$610 from Miss Normand as "hush" money and that he threatened if she did not pay him he would circulate stories that would operate to her discredit.¹⁵⁰

For three weeks Miss Normand had kept officers on Swett's trail in an effort to "catch him with the goods." Last night was the first opportunity the detectives had of springing traps that had been repeatedly set for him. Swett says he was employed by a private detective agency in New York to "get dope on Miss Normand" but he refused to give the name of his employer.

Swett went to Miss Normand's suite in the Baltic Apartments 1127 Orange street, early last evening, following an appointment. He didn't even know that dictagraphs had been set in the room to record every word spoken, neither did he know that Police Detective Frank Edmondson and an assistant were hiding in a clothes closet with their ears to a crack under the door.

According to the detective Swett at once launched into an argument with Miss Normand about her giving him \$610. He exhibited a deputy sheriff's badge, the officer said, and declared he would circulate certain stories unless Miss Normand paid him the money.

Miss Normand, however, declared she could not afford to pay him that sum and asked him to accept \$300. This was practically agreed upon, according to the officer, and the film actress handed Swett a marked \$20 bill as first payment. At that juncture the detective and another man who had been assigned to help stepped into the room and seized Swett. Although the officers say Swett was armed with a pistol, he made no attempt to use it and went with them peaceably after he had been handcuffed.

Swett, the police say, told them that he had been employed by a New York detective agency to get information about Miss Normand, and that certain persons were paying the detective agency large sums for this work. He said he was to receive \$610 for his work, which was \$10 a day.

Miss Normand complained to the police three weeks ago that she was being annoyed by Dr. Swett. Chief of Police Snively detailed Detective Edmondson on the case and he had been on it ever since. The officer planned with Miss Normand to trap Swett into making a formal demand for money in the hearing of witnesses. A dictagraph was placed in her room, with the wire leading into an adjoining apartment.

According to the officers, Swett would call Miss Normand up by telephone and make appointments to call on her at her own apartments, but time after time he failed to appear. He had been to her place while she was present only once before, officers say, and that was when the first alleged demand was made for "hush" money...

* from *Los Angeles Evening Herald*, August 25, 1916

Charge To Fleece Actresses

Asserting that she was "not afraid" to prosecute, but that the decision rested with police, Mabel Normand, famous movie comedienne, today revealed the details of the alleged attempt of Dr. Raymond A. Swett to blackmail her.

Swett, the police say, has confessed to having attempted to extort money from Miss Normand by threatening to circulate stories to her discredit.

¹⁴⁹ At this time, the United States army, under Gen. John J. Pershing, was waging an informal war on the Mexican border against Pancho Villa.

¹⁵⁰ What exactly Mabel was being blackmailed for is as yet to be determined.

"He's a bad man," said Miss Normand. "I would like to see him punished. I am not afraid of his threats, but I will let the police decide what to do."

New charges were brought against the prisoner by Kaplan Brothers, manufacturing jewelers of 401 Title Guarantee building. The jewelers accused Dr. Swett of stealing \$100 in gold from the company.

With the arrest of Dr. Swett the police began an investigation of an alleged blackmail clique which, it is claimed, has victimized beautiful Los Angeles motion picture actresses.

Miss Normand told her story to a reporter for The Evening Herald as she was "making up" in her dressing room at her studio.

"The whole affair was terribly exciting," she said. I was frightened once or twice. It all seems so mysterious and strange to me.

"I first met this Dr. Swett several weeks ago. He telephoned and asked for an appointment. He came to my apartment and when we were alone he told me this story:

"He said he was employed by someone in New York to watch me. He said he shadowed me for sixty-one days and that he was paid \$10 a day. He said he had 'a lot of stuff on me.'

"You know," he said to me, "little presents are sometimes made in cases like this. If you pay me what is coming to me I will forget everything I know."

"I thought he was insane. If he had asked me for the money I would have loaned it to him. I didn't know what to think so I told him to get out of my apartment.

"Then he began telephoning me. Each time he would tell me I had better look out. He told me he would tell things about me that would not sound nice. I asked him what this information was.

"Never once did he hint to me what he 'had on me.' I know he was bluffing. I am not afraid to have people know what I do. He told me that if I paid him \$610 he would tear up the reports he had made. I asked to see these reports but he refused.

"He told me what a bad man he was. Once he showed me a revolver and told me how he shot from the hip. I was frightened then, but I wouldn't let him know it.

"Finally I went to Mr. Claybaugh, who is secretary to Chief Snively. Frank Edmondson was detailed to work the case and he followed Swett for a while. Then we laid a trap for him and he was arrested.

"I really can't imagine what he thought he knew about me that would hurt me. I know no one in New York who is so interested in me as to hire someone to follow me.

"It all seems like I was playing in a picture only it was too real. I will do what the officers think best. If they want to prosecute Swett I will help them. If not, I won't."

Dr. Swett according to Detective Edmondson, is a dentist and lives at 328 North Wilton place. The police say he has confessed to attempting to blackmail Miss Normand.

Swett, at the city jail, said.

"Miss Normand has a sweetheart back in New York. I was employed to watch her and report to New York what she did. I did not try to blackmail Miss Normand. I only tried to do her a favor."

Swett was arrested in Miss Normand's suite at the Baltic apartments. The officers used a dictagraph to record the conversation between Miss Normand and the man. When the film actress handed Swett a marked \$20 bill officers stepped from their hiding place and arrested him.

To lure Swett into the trap, Miss Normand consented to pay him \$300 for his silence. The \$20 bill was the first payment on the \$300 "hush" money.

Mrs. George R. Jones proprietor of the Baltic apartments, said:

"Miss Normand has been a guest here for two years. Her conduct has been beyond reproach."

* from *Los Angeles Evening Express*, August 25, 1916

Swett Complaint In Extortion Case Delayed

Whether or not a complaint shall be issued against Dr. Raymond A. Swett of 228 North Wilton Place on a charge of extortion has not been decided by Assistant City Prosecutor Fred Morton.

Swett was arrested last night in Miss Mabel Normand's suite in the Baltic Apartments, 1127 Orange Street, by Detective Frank Edmondson after, it is claimed he had attempted to make the popular screen star give him more than \$600 to suppress startling information he claimed to have against her.

From his city jail today Swett issued a defy against Miss Normand. "I have the evidence against her and she knows it," he said. "I was employed by a party in New York to trail her and learn what she was doing. The evidence I gathered was of a startling and sensational nature.

"It was at other parties' suggestion that I accept money from Miss Normand and I heartily believe she will not press the charge."

But Miss Normand says she will press the charge. When interviewed in her studio, while she paused between scenes in a new film drama, she said:

"It was purely a scheme to force me to contribute money under threat of exposure of acts of which I was not guilty.

"I do not believe any one in New York ever employed Mr. Swett to follow me.

"I know but three people in the whole city of New York and none of them well enough to justify their employing a private detective to spy upon my actions.

"I have done nothing of which I am ashamed and certainly insist that Mr. Swett be prosecuted on the charge of extortion."

Miss Normand will visit the city prosecutor's office and there hold a conference with Mr. Morton some time today.

After conferring with Miss Normand, Mr. Morton will decide whether he will issue a complaint against Swett.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, August 26, 1916

Blackmailer's Given Freedom

Mabel Normand, motion-picture star, refuses to prosecute Dr. Raymond A. Swett, confessed blackmailer and ex-convict, who was arrested Thursday night in her apartment while attempting to extort \$610 from her. Because Swett has a wife and child dependent on him, Miss Normand informed the police, she did not wish to be responsible for sending him to the penitentiary. He was released from the city Jail last night.

Early in the afternoon, through his attorney, Swett sent the following letter to Miss Normand:

"Realizing the position into which I have thrust myself by my own actions and statements, and the predicaments I now face, I take this means of communicating to you the real facts of the case as it stands.

"For some weeks past I have been facing a financial crisis that seemed more than I could bear, and which I knew was more than I could meet. Obligation after obligation loomed up in front of me like a mountain in size. All of my schemes to make money seemed to fail just when they looked most promising.

"Then the thought came to me that possibly I might be able to make money out of some one who was well known to the public, and your name suggested itself. I was not hired to shadow or follow you, but took it upon myself to do so. In all the times I was near you there was really nothing that could be criticized, yet for the sake of what I was after I made statements that were really false in every detail. You checkmated my moves and beat me to it on the finish.

"I have a wife, child and father dependent on me. They will be the ones to suffer if you see fit to go on with the prosecution. I have come to you clean with my story of wrongdoing, and now ask that you show clemency for their sakes if not my own. Will you kindly consider and give your answer to the bearer?"

The letter was signed with Chief Snively as a witness.

In reply Miss Normand wrote to Chief Snively:

"I am in receipt of a communication, from Dr. Raymond A. Swett. After reading his letter very carefully it is naturally very gratifying to have him acknowledge his attempt to blackmail me.

"While I feel that I am doing an injustice to the public at large by not prosecuting Dr. Swett to the full extent of the law, I am constrained to hear his plea for clemency on account of his wife, child and father, whom I find to be wholly dependent on him for a livelihood.

"I feel perfectly willing to drop the case as it stands and have Dr. Swett released to his wife and child."

Immediately after receipt of the letter Swett was released.

He bears a prison record. After serving a term in the Wisconsin State Penitentiary he was sought by the authorities of Fort Worth, Texas where it was alleged he looted a contribution box in the Catholic Church while being befriended by a father.

June 14, 1907, he was arrested here on a charge of felony embezzlement in connection with the transaction with a tailoring company. He was sentenced August 10, 1907, to serve three years in San Quentin.

Two years ago yesterday he was in an automobile accident and he was arrested for reckless driving. He was charged with having imperiled the lives of three occupants of the other car.

He was married six years ago to a Los Angeles girl to whom he had been engaged before his last incarceration. She waited through his term to wed him.

* from *The Oregonian*, September 17, 1916

A Visit to Keystone: Mabel Can Still Make The Old Man Laugh

Mabel Normand hasn't been seen in pictures for some time, but she is still cavorting about under the glare of the Cooper-Hewitts.¹⁵¹ The next time she is seen on the screen she will be presented by the Mabel Normand Film Company, as everybody knows. The other day Mabel and little Teddy Sampson¹⁵² (no Teddy is not a boy; she's a Fine Arts comedienne) walked into the Keystone studios together. There they met Mack Sennett, who used to be a comedy policeman in the Middle Ages, but who now supervises the Keystone plant.

They found Mr. Sennett all by himself over in one corner. He was looking mournful, as he always does when he is thinking up something excruciatingly funny for a Keystone comedy. Making fun is a mighty sad and serious business with Mr. Sennett and anyone who makes him laugh has done something noteworthy.

Mabel and Teddy wandered over to the master laugh generator and said "Good morning," and Mr. Sennett said "Good morning." He didn't say it as if he really thought it was a good morning; just a middling kind of morning and hardly worth any special enthusiasm. That didn't suit Mabel. She wanted him to look cheerful, so she told him a joke.

Now, nobody but Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand and Teddy Sampson know what the joke was. But it must have been something absolutely new in joemillerism, for Mr. Sennett immediately eradicated the wrinkles of care from his brow and installed a brand new set of wrinkles, as he laughed so loud that the Keystone fire department responded.

This proves conclusively that Mabel Normand is a comedian, if anybody ever doubted it. Teddy Sampson laughed too. In fact, a trade magazine¹⁵³ published a picture of the three laughing and remarked incidentally that "the pigeon-toes pullet enjoying herself in the background is Teddy Sampson."

* from *Photoplay*, September 1916

" Julian Johnson

...Very few people outside the profession realize what Mabel Normand has meant to the Keystone organization; not that her comic excellencies are not apparent in any given part, but who, among the merely entertained, asks why and wherefore? The theory that the playgoer asks only to laugh, or to emote, is, rightly or wrongly, the cornerstone of the show business. It is neither exaggeration nor personal tribute to say that Mabel Normand knows more about screen comedy, and has made better screen comedy, than any woman actively

¹⁵¹ Mercury-flamed electric lights used for filming in the studio, and that glowed a distinctive blue-green.

¹⁵² Wife of Ford Sterling.

¹⁵³ See 1916 *Green Book* p. 674.

photographed. This statement is merely a cool appraisal. Who pulled "My Valet" through the breakers of failure? Mabel Normand. Who put the legerdemain of appeal into "Stolen Magic" and the charm of the romantically ridiculous into "Fatty and Mabel Adrift"? Mabel Normand. And who -- if you'll pardon a backward jump of more than a year -- gave lovely relief to Chaplin and Dressler in "Tillie's Punctured Romance"? Normand, surnamed Mabel. Her few Fort Lee pictures have made us wish for more frequent appearances.

* from Mack Sennett papers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences ¹⁵⁴

· Telegram from Harry Aitken to Sennett)

28 Sept. 1916

Macklyn Sennett, Esq.

Knickerbocker Hotel, NYC

Dear Mr. Sennett,

In order to induce you to enter into an agreement with the Keystone Film Co. and Triangle Film Corp., becoming even date here with, I agree that upon the expiration of the term of the agreement whereby 65% of the capital stock of the Triangle Film Corp is deposited with Title Guarantee and Trust Company, I will transfer to you 23,000 shares of said stock, provided that at that time you are supervising the production of Keystone pictures for Triangle.

H. E. Aitken

· Excerpt from Triangle contract between Kessel and Sennett, September 29, 1916)

Sennett to receive 25% of what is known as the Mabel Normand Picture Company, other 75% to belong to Keystone Film Co. Picture¹⁵⁵ is to be exploited by Keystone Company and yourself, and from the first sums received in excess of exploitation costs the Keystone Company shall be paid back the actual production cost of the picture. Thereafter, all sums received in excess of exploitation costs and costs of positive prints shall be divided between yourself and Keystone.

New York Motion Picture Corp. owns 57% of capital stock of Keystone.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, October 1916

Danger-Signal Orbs.

Let us lift up our voice and praise

Mabel

The comedienne star ¾ her we'll label.

From her eyes gleam forth darts

That do damage to hearts

More severe than her pie-slinging's able.

Solomon Gelman, Pittsburgh, PA.

* from *Motion Picture*, October 1916

Mabel Normand recently gave a very original sort of party on her yacht. The invitations to the "burial party" requested her guests be dressed in Chinese mourning costumes. Two Jap servants officiated as undertakers and appeared on deck, carrying a casket, in which the remains was a real slapstick. The casket was committed to the deep, to appropriate funeral music, thus signifying Miss Normand's final good-bye to slapstick comedy.

* from *Photoplay*, October, 1916

Whoops, my dear! And then some more whoops. Nothing has been said about it by Keystone's mimeograph department because it's such a childish thing that the victim probably had the item "killed" before it got out. But even if it does come under the general classification of juvenile indoor sports, it is very, very annoying. What's it all about? Oh, nothing more exciting than Mabel Normand having an attack of whooping cough. But she's almost well now.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 1916

Career In Pictures

by Mabel Normand

Ever since my work for the motion picture screen has received a sufficient amount of favorable attention at the hands of critics and fans to place me in the limelight of publicity as a star my mail has been literally choked with letters from girls from all parts of the world. The writers, for the most part, range in ages from 16 to 20 years and nearly all of them ask for advice as to a motion-picture career. At first I used to reply to these appeals each night after a days work. It was not long, however, until the letters became so numerous that it was practically impossible for me to answer each one personally.

Nearly all of these letters are from girls who are so obviously sincere and serious in their endeavors to decide whether they shall "go into the movies," which is the modernized version of "going on the stage," that I want to have them properly answered. My secretary now replies to most of the letters, for she knows just what my opinions are

¹⁵⁴ Harry Aitkin (sometimes spelled Aikin), along with brother Roy, were formerly the heads of the Mutual film distribution company, before starting the Triangle Film Corporation. Adam Kessel and Charles Bauman, of course, were the original founders and shareholders of the New York Film Corporation, of which Bison and Keystone were a part, and whose films Mutual released. The ensuing material deals with the Triangle-Keystone merger. For more information on the business transactions between the parties considered here see *Kops and Custards* and *Mack Sennett: The Man, The Myth and The Comedies*, both by Kalton Lahue, and Brent Walker's *Mack Sennett's Fun Factory*.

¹⁵⁵ Mickey?

and just how I would personally answer almost any question, but whenever a new subject arises, or whenever a request for information is a bit out of the ordinary, the letter is brought to my attention and answered by me personally.

There are many drawbacks and at the same time there are many compensations attached to my profession. In one picture we used a lake in Los Angeles at a time when it was just being drained. We knew of this event a few weeks ahead and a comedy was prepared by Mack Sennett in which the lake was the locality and emptying the principal situation. In the picture I went on a boat ride. While my escort was rowing his rival was at the mechanism that operates the outlet, opening the flood gates. The water lowered and finally we were left marooned in mud. A rope was thrown and we were dragged through the slimy mud to the bank. It was awful. We were covered from head to foot and before we could drive back to the studio the mud had commenced to dry and harden.

That night I sat at dinner with a friend from Denver, whom I had not seen in several years. An elaborate bath and the attentions of a maid had removed all traces of my strenuous afternoon. My friend remarked in the course of our conversation: "I suppose the hardships of motion picture actresses are very much overestimated." I agreed with her. I was too tired from my rescue from the lake to argue or explain. I told her that it was an exceedingly monotonous life. Poor dear. -- I hope she will never have any personal experience to disillusion her.

I have had to dive and swim in rough ocean scenes. I have fought with bears, fallen out of a rapidly moving automobile, jumped off a second story roof into a flower bed and risked life, limb and peace of mind in innumerable ways -- and all to make people laugh. Some work days I have gone home and cried with ache in body and heart and at the very moment of my misery thousands of theater-goers were rocking in their seats with laughter at some few scenes in which I had worked a few weeks before.

But the heart-breaking scenes are not everyday occurrences. In many of the pictures the parts we play we love just as much as the audiences that see the finished product exhibited. There is the sweet and the bitter, much the same as in any other profession or business in which a girl makes her living.

* from *New York Dramatic Mirror*, October 7, 1916

Mabel Normand: "I am against Censorship, whether it be Municipal, State or Federal. The film industry is directed by men of sufficient mental and moral caliber to insure the proper conduct of their profession. Censorship is a hindrance of the most important institution of the age -- The Film Drama."

* from *Studio Directory*, October 21, 1916

RICHARD JONES SELECTED TO DIRECT MABEL NORMAND IN HER FEATURE PRODUCTIONS

When the Mabel Normand Film Company was organized Richard Jones was selected to serve as Studio Manager and director for the comedy -- drama production starring the former Keystone girl and perhaps best known comedienne of the screen.

Studio Manager Jones received this promotion as the result of the very excellent work he had performed during the past four years he has been associated with Mr. Sennett, where Miss Normand learned of his work. He has been engaged in work pertaining to the motion picture industry for six years, and the first two were in association with O. T. Crawford at St. Louis. When he came to the Keystone Mr. JONES became the personal aid of Mr. Sennett in the important work of cutting or editing the Keystone comedies which immediately made a name for Mr. Sennett. After eighteen months in this work he was given a company and from that time until he went to his new position he served as Director, producing many of the most successful Keystone character comedies.

Since the Keystone became a part of the Triangle program Mr. Jones has produced several of the most successful. His first release was that titled "*His (A)Game Old Knight*," which had Charles Murray and Harry Booker as its stars. Another of his big successes was that titled "*The Judge*," with Harry Booker in the featured part, the name role. Another success released recently was "*The Love Riot*," with four of the best known Keystone players -- Charles Murray, Louise Fazenda, Harry Booker and Alice Davenport in the featured parts.

Now Mr. Jones has been engaged in producing the first Mabel Normand comedy drama which will he completed shortly. To date it is known under the title "*Pat*," ("*Mickey*") and the present plans provide that it shall consist of seven reels. When released it is expected that it will create a sensation in the film world, because of the many novel features introduced and the exceptional work of the star. This

picture has many dramatic scenes for the world famous screen comedienne and Miss Normand's best talent will be shown in this subject.

* from *Arizona Gazette*, November 8, 1916

Mabel Normand To Visit State Fair

Miss Mabel Normand, one of the most celebrated queens of the motion picture screen will come to the Arizona State Fair with her own Company of players to stage a photoplay according to a telegram received last evening by Secretary T. D. Shaughnessy.

The telegram from H. L. Kerr,¹⁵⁶ manager of the Mabel Normand Film company, stated that Miss Normand would visit the fair to make a picture in event a "Peace Day" would be set aside for her in view of the fact that Miss Normand is an advocate of the peace propaganda. Secretary Shaughnessy readily agreed to this arrangement.

* from *Arizona Gazette*, November 14, 1916

Popular Film Star Comes To Phoenix

One of the interesting features of the state fair tomorrow, Thursday and Friday will be the appearance of the Normand Feature Film company, who will stage a scene for a \$125,000 picture now in preparation by the company, and will also photograph a race track scene for the same picture.

¹⁵⁶ "Kerr" is evidently Sennett publicity man Harry Carr.

H. L. Kerr, a former resident of Phoenix, but at present manager of this company at Los Angeles, has been here for several days making arrangements for these pictures, and has received the hearty co-operation of the fair managers.

It was originally planned to take the race track scene, which is in reality supposed to represent an event in New York, in either Florida or New Orleans, but Kerr, realizing the magnitude of the grand stand at the Phoenix race track and the superiority of the atmospheric conditions in Arizona for photography, induced the eastern managers to have it photographed here during the fair.

It will afford an opportunity for all visitors to have themselves incorporated in a picture which will be shown all over the United States. The company arrived in Phoenix this morning and will be busy for the next day or two in constructing two large towers for the cameras and in making other preparations for this big event.

Friday has been set apart at the fair as Mabel Normand Peace day, when duplications of scenes at the San Diego exposition will be made, and Miss Normand, with two veterans of the civil war, will bury the implements of war, expressing her idea of "Peace on earth, good will to men."

Miss Normand is an enthusiastic peace worker and her idea is that there is something else in life than to draw a big salary. She is having 2, 500, 000 "Mabel Normand Garden Buttons" manufactured for children with a view of interesting them in planting and growing flowers, vegetables and trees, rather than to have their ideas directed towards war.

With her on this trip here are director, F. Richard Jones, Minta Durfee, Wheeler Oakman, L. J. Cody and a cast of eighteen people, and the expenses of the trip will be over \$5000.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, November 15, 1916

Mabel on Advertising

Mabel Normand was the guest of honor at the luncheon party given by the Los Angeles Ad Club last Tuesday of this week. She extolled the virtues of advertising, especially of that brand for which the Ad Club stands, and was riotously applauded.

* from *Arizona Republican*, November 15, 1916

Mabel Normand, beloved movie comedienne, who has been offered everything from a portable house to a palace, had to get down on her knees, before she could get one tiny room and bath in Phoenix.

The small girl with the wonderful eyes that behave fairly well, had a long, lonely day, but it was a brand new experience and she loved it. More than that, she accomplished what hundreds of others could not do yesterday -- she secured apartments at the Adams after every available space had been leased. How she did it, only Miss Normand knows, and if she gave away her secret, others could not profit by it for lack of the essential quality -- the marvelous Normand personality.

Last evening just before dinner the great star was resting in her room. She made as pretty a picture as she ever posed for in her rose velvet negligee with cut silver velvet motifs and flowing sleeves of silver lace. With her was her great friend, Minta Durfee, who will appear in the comedy drama that is to be screened at the state fair Friday. Miss Durfee, who incidentally is the wife of Roscoe Arbuckle, has always been a great admirer of Miss Normand, and doesn't mind a bit that she plays opposite her fat and funny husband.

Both young women are tremendously pleased with Phoenix, even though they were homeless for a period of several hours.

"I didn't sit around and mope," said Mabel Normand. "I shopped. I bought dozens of the most fascinating Indian things, beads and serapes, and I don't know what all, for Alice Joyce, who will simply rave when she sees them. Of course, it was annoying not to have a roof over my head, but it worked out nicely," she added with a sly smile. "I did not have to quarrel with the hotel management, either, for you know I do not believe in petty wars."

The most beautiful of film queens is a warm advocate of peace. It was her suggestion that led T. D. Shaughnessy to set aside Friday as Peace Day at the state fair. Miss Normand will have charge of the ceremonies which will be dramatic in the extreme. Implements of war will be buried and other expressions of her idea of "peace on earth, good will to men" will be made manifest.

Miss Normand is keenly interested in the fair and will not wait until Peace Day to make her first appearance on the grand stand. She intends to be among the thousands of spectators this afternoon.

* from *Arizona Republican*, November 16, 1916

Screen Favorites With Normand Co.

The film drama, important scenes of which the Mabel Normand Film Company is making this week in Phoenix, is expected to rank among the few really great film plays. It has been many months in the making, and during that period many thousands of feet have been made to be discarded afterward, because (they were) not quite up to the exacting standard set by the star.

Among the members of the company who are in Phoenix, are several who have won distinction, both as directors and actors. These include F. Richard Jones, the chief director, whose mastery of his art has been proved by his direction of some of the best Keystone comedies. Mr. Jones assumed direction of the photodrama, after several predecessors had been found unsatisfactory. G. O. Nichols, assistant director and an important member of the cast, is one of the veterans of the screen. He started with the Edison and was one of the Biograph Company in the early days of Griffith, and was the producer of Ibsen's *Ghosts*. Madame LaVarnie made a reputation in character parts in the old Biograph Company and on the stage before she took to the screen. Wheeler Oakman, as the leading man in the *Ne'er Do Wells*, [one] of the most successful of modern screen productions, is known to all screen fans. Minta Durfee was achieving eminence in the drama when she became Mrs. Roscoe Arbuckle. A character who will be made famous by this drama, although now unknown to fame, is Minnie Prevost,¹⁵⁷ an Indian woman who does a remarkable part in a remarkable way. L. J. Cody completes the list of well known players, who are here engaged in this screen production.

¹⁵⁷ i.e., Minnie Devereaux

* from *Arizona Gazette*, November 17, 1916

Mabel Normand Calls Peace Army

by Mabel Normand

Dear boys and girls, parents and educators of Arizona: I am very proud and happy because I have been asked to tell you about our PEACE ARMY PLAN and what you can do to help it along.

There are many acres in Arizona which, not long ago, were barren and desolate. There are many acres in Europe which little more than two years ago were productive and beautiful

While Arizonans have been making productive and beautiful the barrens lands of Arizona, Europeans have been making barren and desolate the productive lands in Europe.

During this dreadful war, millions of boys and girls have lost their fathers and their homes. I do not believe that this war would have come if the grown people of Europe had been taught when they were boys and girls that God has put us here to conquer the earth, and not to conquer men; to create and not destroy beautiful and useful things; to love each other and not to hate each other; to save human life, and not to slay human life.

Full of this belief, several thousands of us met at the San Diego Exposition recently, where we buried the arms of war and planted the olive symbol of peace. Each boys and girl present promised to make the earth produce at least one plant and to care for and to love that plant as their symbol of peace and happiness.

And because David Starr Jordan, George Wharton James and many wise and good men and women think well of it, I am sending a message to parents and educators all over the world, asking them to help the boys and girls to celebrate Christmas by having each one of them start a flower plant in a pot on Christmas day, so that they will have it ever near them as a symbol of love and creation.

Having done this, we ask you boys and girls to begin the new year of 1917 by gathering together in schools or in other public places, there to bury the symbols of hate and war, as we did in San Diego.

Parent educators, boys and girls of Arizona, this is my call to you.

May I not hope that each of you will plant your flower of love on Christmas day and bury the arms of war with the new year's advent? And may I hope that you will write and place somewhere near your flower of love this message sent to you, so that you can see it each day, by David Starr Jordan:

"The Chinese have a proverb: 'Where armies quarter, thorns and thistles grow.' War and war-making mean desolation and hate. As roses are fairer than tin soldiers and bayonets, so are the thoughts of flower-planting children sweeter and nobler than hatred, fear and suspicion, which are always part of the war."

* from *Arizona Republican*, November 17, 1916

Army of Garden Soldiers Miss Normand's Peace Plan

By Mabel Normand

I have been asked to tell the readers of the Republican about our Peace plan and what it may do to discourage future wars.

The thought back of the movement is that to prevent men from slaying each other you must begin by teaching the little children what should be the main purpose of life and that this is to draw out of the earth the riches that have been stored in her bosom for the use and happiness of man.

If each child is encouraged to grow a plant and if this plant is made to serve as a symbol to the child of our main work in life and that when we destroy anything that is good, or useful, or beautiful that we are breaking the true law of life a first step is made toward universal peace.

Is it possible to promote a permanent peace among nations while the individuals who make up the nations strive and hate and seek to destroy each other? It may be possible, but it is certainly would be made much easier if as children they are taught that the true way to make the world a better place to live in is to work with and for each other to get out of earth all there is in it.

Although the suggestion of this movement came from me, it is being taken up by men and women who know better than I do how to develop it. Educators inform me that the American School Peace Society to which most of the eminent educators of the country belong will take it up and make it a part of their work and with this powerful influence aided by the mothers of the country, I hope soon to see an army of Garden Soldiers in America greater in numbers than the armies that are fighting the battles of hate and destruction in Europe.

* from *Motion Picture*, December 1916

The Dream That Came True

by Pearl Gaddis

All of you who have for years been laughing with Mabel Normand, talking gaily of her funny exploits, would never believe that those long, silky, black curls covered anything more than a brain devoted to creating laughs. That she could be serious; that she could have keen ambitions; that she could cherish for years a thrilling and eminently sober dream, would never occur to those who know her only from her screen frolics. But she has guarded that dream, and every moment has been in effort towards making that dream come true. And it has. She has a studio all her own, on which her name, in four foot letters, smiles at the passerby on all four sides. The studio has been built as she wanted it built, and it has ever so many pretty little feminine touches that make it artistic as well as businesslike, comfortable as well as efficient.

We were talking one morning, on the tiny, vine-hung balcony outside of her dressing room, where we could look down on the busy scene below. She sat in a big, wicker chintz-cushioned chair, and sighed blissfully as she looked up at the backs of one of the signs that spells her name.

"At last," she breathed, "I am almost thru with the first picture of the new series, a second play chosen and being prepared for production, and still I can hardly realize that my dream has come true. If I hadn't worked so hard and planned so hard these years to attain just this end, I'm afraid I would have my head turned by it all. But I know a cure for that -- hard work! There's plenty of that ahead for me too."

"What is the next play?" I asked as she stopped and looked contemplatively over the little balcony. She whirled instantly, all enthusiasm.

"What do you suppose?" she cried, her big brown eyes aglow with enthusiasm. "The Little Minister."¹⁵⁸ At last I am to play Lady Babbie. It's a part I've always longed to play, and it's going to be the second of my series. Oh, I'm so happy over it all."

"I should think you would be," I answered, responding involuntarily to her magnetic enthusiasm. "What are you doing now?"

"Here in the studio we are calling it 'Mountain Bred'¹⁵⁹ In it I have the lovable part of a daughter of a mining camp, brought up by the men in their funny, clumsy way. When they realize that I'm almost a woman, they decide that I need a woman's care. So I am sent to New York to live with my aunt. When she finds that I am not as rich as she expected and hope, she puts me to work in the kitchen and treats me very badly. But that doesn't prevent my falling in love and the story ending unexpectedly but happy. It's a most lovable part."

And just between ourselves, it's a most lovable girl who will play the part, too.

"And what about your studio plans, Miss Normand?"

"About my coming plays? We are going to make only eight a year; that will give us plenty of time to do our very best on them, allowing about six weeks to each five-reel picture, you see."

She turned to me suddenly.

"Have you seen my dressing room? No? Then come with me," and she jumped up and almost ran to the apartment that, by old-fashioned tradition and lack of a proper name must still be called a dressing room. It was a big, cozy, comfortable room, opening off a balcony, with two big windows. There were rose-chintz curtains, cushions, comfy chairs -- in fact, it was as dainty as its small mistress -- a perfect setting for one of the loveliest girls in the Land of Make-Believe.

"The men tease me -- or try -- to about the 'woman's touch' that I have given the studio," she laughed, as she seated herself at the dressing shelf and began that mysterious process known as making up, "But I know that it is good, and that they really like it even if they do try to tease. So I just tease back about their being unwilling to leave the studio at night and their eagerness to get here in the morning."

I didn't in the least wonder about their eagerness, for, you see, the small star is there from early morning until late in the evening, which rather explains their love for the studio, doesn't it?

"You see," she went on, "I have a hobby that dovetails beautifully with my work here. It's studio housekeeping, or rather studio homekeeping. I was allowed to plan a great many of the details of the studio here, and it has been my ambition to make it in its own small way a model plant. Efficiency comes first, of course, but I didn't see why a studio should be a huge, unlovely barn of a place, just because it was built of wood. So I planned for comfort and beauty, as well as efficiency. That explains the rugs downstairs, the adorable balcony and the attractive dressing rooms."

"No wonder you have great hopes and can promise much from your coming plays. "I said sympathetically, with another glance around the rose-and-cream walls.

She turned quickly, a "lip-stick" poised just above her pretty lips.

"Not promises, nor even prophecies," she cried gaily, "but hopes -- lots of them -- and a feeling, away deep down deep in my heart, that in this métier -- somewhere -- I shall find and give the best that is in me."

She has her own stock company, headed by Wheeler Oakman, late of Selig, and in the picking of this company Supervising Director Mack Sennett allowed Miss Normand almost complete authority; and the arrangement with Mr. Sennett is that the "baby company" may call on the parent organization of Keystone for anything it needs in the way of props, costumes or technical assistance, or in fact, anything at all that is needed. Her plays are chosen in co-operation with Mr. Sennett and the Keystone scenario staff.

And now for some facts about the girl who has worked so courageously to make her dream come true.

She was born in Atlanta, Georgia,¹⁶⁰ and educated there. When she was about sixteen, her parents moved to New York, where she first began her way in an art as an artist's model. It was while she was living on Staten Island that she took to the water and laid the foundation for the fame she has acquired in aquatic sports. Her stage beginning was as a member of the "merry-merry" in a musical comedy. There came an off season in musical comedy, and the chorus girl had a friend who suggested the movies. Mabel was game, and she went over to Vitagraph, where she was given employment almost immediately.

From Vitagraph she graduated to Biograph, under the direction of D. W. Griffith, where her most celebrated picture was "The Diving Girl." She worked in comedies, under the direction of Mack Sennett, as well as in a number of strong dramatic subjects for Mr. Griffith. When Mr. Sennett went to California to make Keystone comedies for the New York Motion Picture Corporation, Miss Normand went with him as leading woman.

"There was a long hard struggle when we were never sure that there would be a pay-envelope on Saturday," she confessed to me in a reticent mood. "There were just four of us then -- Mr. Sennett, Fred Mace, and Roscoe Arbuckle -- and me! But we worked hard, and hoped hard, and just trusted in luck. And better days soon came."

As they always do, backed up by that.

Right after Christmas, Miss Normand came to New York with Roscoe Arbuckle's company to do "pie comedies," but her heart was set on a company of her own, and Mack Sennett, remembering the days when she had held the highest hope of them all, even though there seemed nothing in sight but hard work and no reward, remembering her unfailing enthusiasm and courage, determined to surprise her with the realization of her dream.

Sennett (in appreciation of her hard work and hopes) purchased a four-acre tract and ground broken for building of the studio. Then a telegram was sent to New York ordering prompt return of Miss Normand. She expected of course to return to work at Keystone, but Mr. Sennett met her at the train and told her that he wanted to show her

¹⁵⁸ Over the years, in different interviews, Mabel expressed the desire to make J.M. Barrie's *The Little Minister*. Why this purported long cherished wish was never realized is not certain. Earlier (see, e.g., *N.Y. Morning Telegraph*, June 25, 1916) it was reported that Mabel owned the screen rights to Barrie's stories.

¹⁵⁹ i.e., *Mickey*.

¹⁶⁰ Yet another instance of early misinformation regarding Mabel's birthplace.

something. Curious, but accepting his leadership, she allowed herself to be bundled into his machine and driven to the place where the studio was to stand. Mr. Sennett stopped the car, pointed to the workmen and said:

"What do you suppose they are building there?"

"I don't know," she answered a little crossly, for she was tired out from her long trip -- "an addition to Keystone?"

"Well hardly," answered Mr. Sennett grinning. "They are breaking ground for the erection of the -- Mabel Normand Studio!"

Miss Normand stared, unable to believe her eyes or ears. When Mr. Sennett had made it clear to her that she was really to have her own studio, she insisted on climbing out of the car and examining every square inch of the ground. For a woman to watch the building of her home and not to have a finger in the pie is an aggravation indeed. So it wasn't long before the busy comedienne set to work planning studio and home comforts with the architect. And during the days when the studio was being rushed to completion, she was on hand almost as much as the workmen. "Here comes the little boss," they got into the habit of saying, and hardly a brick, board or tile was laid without first undergoing her critical inspection. And she was the first one to set foot in the newly completed building.

Surprise followed surprise, until tears of mixed joy and gratitude stood in Miss Mabel's eyes. Then came a wonderful Oriental rug for her dressing room, the gift of Mack Sennett and a canary in a gilded bird cage, from Los Angeles friends, besides pretty furnishings and nick-nacks, that gave the studio opening the air of a festive wedding.

The fair Mabel can spring a surprise or two herself, and during the strenuous days of studio building, an idea frisked about under her chestnut curls that took shape on the opening day.

Her company of players and her friends were led, figuratively, hand-in-hand, from room to room, from glass covered stage to "prop" rooms, and finally assembled in the star's dressing room. And just here came her own little surprise. Under the chefship [sic] of a nimble Jap, a dainty luncheon was served to her guests, concocted and cooked in a tiny kitchenette adjoining her dressing-room. Hit No.1 for Miss Mabel! The finest work of Mabel Normand's career is blossoming forth under the stimulus of her own company. What she has given us before has been merely the promise. Now we may hope for the fruition.

1917

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, January 1917

Mabel Normand took a one-day vacation recently by appearing at the San Diego Exposition. Mabel took in all the sights; delivered two orations; wrote nearly three thousand autographs; posed with the Mayor for a news picture, and was flashlited at a banquet. Her day of rest!

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, January 1917

" Roberta Courtlandt

....Mabel Norman loves her horse and the long, glorious rides she has on him when work at the Mabel Normand Feature Film Company does not demand the attention of its mistress. Mabel scares Director- General Mack Sennett almost into spasms by her long rides. With a box of lunch swung over one shoulder, a folding kodak over the other, Mabel rides away "into the misty distance," or "over the horizon," leaving the studio folks wondering whether she'll forget to come back. Mabel admits. Albeit reluctantly, that sometimes she is afraid she wouldn't, if it wasn't for her "hobby horse"; he has a habit of hearing the call of supper, along about six o'clock, and no amount of urging can dissuade him from promptly heeding that call. I imagine it's a pretty good thing that he has acquired that habit, or he would be of little assistance to a pretty mistress, who has become lost in thought, and, without his aid, is likely to become lost, in fact, as well!...

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, January 1917

Mabel Patent Applied For!

Take the Mabel Normand wink from the Mabel Normand eye;

Take the Mabel Normand twinkle and the jerk;

Take the Mabel Normand stumble, and the other rough and tumble,

Still, Mabel bobs up smiling at her work.

For there's no amount of slapstick that can quite erase her charms,

Tho she make up just as ugly as she's able;

For there's just a little something that others seem to lack,

And when you look for what it is, you find it's Mabel!

- Mabel Weathers Burlson, Muskogee, Oklahoma

* from *Mack Sennett Weekly*, vol. I, January 8, 1917

Film fans are tired of vampires; tired of moving picture cannon and charging soldiers. There is too much real war and too much real sorrow in the world just now to need heart pangs that are made to order.

Mickey will be as refreshing as a breeze from the mountains on a hot summer day. There are no vampires and no battles.

* from *Mack Sennett Weekly*, vol.I, January 15, 1917

The Little Girl You Will Never Forget

[Mabel described as great favorite in Japan. Letters from two college boys:]

Our dearest Miss Mabel

Beautiful lady:

We are two Japanese boys.

If you can understand such a broken English letter please read this. Joe saw you in films which acted by you so many times and pleased by your nice eyes, mouth, hairs and other ones. Your reports are best in our country among all another foreign players. We wish to meet you very much, but we are several thousand miles apart and can't do as we wish.

• Editor of Japanese movie magazine writes:

In Japan, the films featuring you are always popular. Many audiences go to see your figure on the movie theater. So when the productions featuring you are running the houses are always crowded. When I publish your portrait in my magazine, our readers are very contented.

* from *Mack Sennett Weekly*, January 22, 1917

• From a fan letter written to Mabel Normand by a Japanese fan

How nicely you express your emotions. Truly in your acting there is floating the nobleness, steadiness and activity. That's your life, your power and it's impossible to hide the voice of admiration in my mind so that I miss you at that point....In Japan your name is very famous and everyone knows your fair name even a young folks. Therefore when you will appear on the screen your name is called out with a loud voice.

[Mabel also received letters from soldiers in France, particularly Canadians.]¹⁶¹

• Sennett:

"There is a wonderful future in the movies for a girl with beauty and brains who is willing to discard all sentimental nonsense and work like a slave."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, January 28, 1917

" E. V. Durling

A special preview of the long-awaited Mabel Normand photo-play "Mickey," will be given in Los Angeles this week. Mack Sennett deserves much credit for his dogged determination not to release this initial Normand picture until it was up to the high standard he desired.

* from *Photoplay*, February 1917

Mabel Normand gave Arizona a treat during the state fair at Phoenix in November. She and her company of 17 attended that function at Phoenix and filmed many scenes for her new play in that city.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, February 1917

Popular Player Contest

Mary Pickford.....	462,190
Francis Bushman.....	411,800
Marguerite Clark.....	410,820
Pearl White.....	310,690
Theda Bara.....	294,035

(listed 36 in list of 104)

Charles Chaplin.....	105,325
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(listed 86 in list of 104)

Mabel Normand.....	35,730
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(others listed:)

Maurice Costello.....	34,005
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Mae Murray.....	26,805
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Louise Glaum.....	20,920
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* from *Mack Sennett Weekly*, vol. I, February 12, 1917

Indian Woman Tells History¹⁶²

She answers to the name of Minnie now, for she has long since learned and adopted the ways of the white man, and her teepee is now a bungalow close to the Mabel Normand studio at which she is earning her daily bread as an important character in the forthcoming production of "Mickey," but back in the red days of American history when the young men of the Sioux and the Cheyenne nations fought and lost to the whites the battle for their very existence, Minnie was "Earth Woman," daughter of Chief Plenty Horses, head of his tribe.

Turn back the pages of your history and you will find many a gory page on which the name of Chief Plenty Horses appears more than once. Minnie has read them herself, but for the most part turns up her nose at the printed pages.

"White man's history. They do not tell the truth," she scorns, and when she is in the mood she will tell you about the Custer Massacre, for she was there, and helped loot the bodies of the dead after "great chief Yellow Hair" passed into the great beyond.

"Can't remember because I was only eight years old?" Minnie snorts. "You forget I was an Indian then, and an Indian does not forget. I remember the happenings of those days better than the things of yesterday, for the

¹⁶¹ The United States did not formally enter the War until April 6, 1917.

¹⁶² Minnie Devereaux (or Prevost, as given in some of the earlier sources) was a very talented American Indian actress/comedienne who appeared with Mabel in *Mickey* and *Suzanna*. Because there is so little else found about this great favorite of Mabel's, it is worthwhile to include this very rare and interesting account of Minnie's about Custer's Last Stand in which her father participated and of which she, as a young child, was an indirect witness.

white man has taught me how to forget. You write things on paper, you lose the paper and then is gone. We did not write down our thoughts but stored them away in memory.

"Custer!" and she spits viciously on the floor. "How we hated him. Your history is all wrong. He did not stumble into a trap. He was doomed before he ever started. For eight years the death sentence had been placed upon him, but he was too alert. Not till 1876 did we catch him asleep.

"And it was what he did to my mother that sealed his fate. My mother, wife of Chief Plenty Horses. I was three days old when Custer raided the Cheyennes. Of course I don't remember, but I have seen the scar on my mother's wrist, left when in the blackness of night, Custer and his men raided the Cheyennes and the Osages.

"I was strapped on a board and as my mother swung me onto her back, ready to flee, a bullet fanned my face and grazed the wrist to the hand that she held over my mouth to keep me from squawking.

"We fled, all that was left of the tribe; fled south, even into old Mexico, and then gradually worked back north, in the far west and circled back to the Dakotas.

"But long before the grand circle was complete -- it took eight years, the grand pow wow of the nations had set the seal of death on Custer. We tried time and again to get him, but without avail until '76.

"Well, do I remember when the courier came to us in the far west and told us in the far west and told us Custer was coming. To all parts of the land the word was sent and we began to gather.

"Near the ground we had selected for the great battle the pitfall was laid. The women, the children and the old men went one way. The young men went another, but they left no trail. It was our trail, the trail of the old men, and the women, that Custer followed, and we led him to his doom.

"After it was over I played on the battle ground, and looked into the faces of the dead white men; I played among their dead dressed in a pair of their high boots and a soldier cap and a coat with brass buttons on it.

"Do you know, some of them were dead without a scratch on them? Just dead from fright.

"Custer didn't die that way. We hated him, but he was brave. My father was within arms length of Yellow Hair when he fell. He told me.

"No Sioux and no Cheyenne would kill him and he was the last to die. He fought like a tiger, even after all the powder was gone. It was a Ute who slew him; an undersized, grizzled faced Ute. He hit him on the side of the head and shot after he fell.

"That night my mother made me take off the soldier's boots and hat and coat. 'His ghost will come,' she said.

"Not long after that the great treaty was signed and after we had been disarmed my father was sent to prison near St. Augustine. When he was released he met General Sherman and together they planned the regeneration of the Indian. They made me go to school, but that is another story."

* from *Moving Picture World*, February 17, 1917

" Bob Doman

Paris as Seen by a New Yorker

...Charlot (Charlie Chaplin), Lolot (Mabel Normand), and Marie Dressler have the cinema audiences of the Grand Boulevards at their mercy. The French want what they want when they want it, and in a cinema in the Boulevard des Italiens the other night a near-riot was precipitated when the management delayed presenting Charlot, Lolot and Miss "Dresslaire" on the screen.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 3, 1917

Those who are interested in viewing themselves in motion pictures will be interested to learn that the racing scenes of "Mickey," the Mabel Normand feature now nearly completed are to be staged at Exposition Park here Sunday.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, March 4, 1917

" E. V. Durling

(Los Angeles)--H. B. Rosen of the Harriman National Bank of New York gave a party to Adolph Zukor coincident with that gentleman's return to New York City. A special orchestra provided the music, and in order to make things harmonize with the quality of the gathering the dinner was served on the Alexandria gold plate. The list of guests included Mary Pickford, Mr. and Mrs. Cecil de Mille, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. C. De Mille, Marco Hellman, Carl Paige, Fannie Ward, Jack Dean, Margaret Illington, Mae Murray, Mrs. Beatrice De Mille, Marian Selby, Mme. Aldrich, Mabel Normand, Olive Thomas, Jeanie MacPherson, Blanche Sweet, Dorothy Gish, Elliott Dexter, Jack Pickford, Antonio Moreno and Marshall Neilan.

* from *Moving Picture World*, March 10, 1917

Production of Keystone pictures began on July 4, 1912, on which date Mack Sennett took a small party of players including Mabel Normand and Ford Sterling, to Fort Lee, N.J...The first day they started out in grand style in a hired automobile. They found a good-natured man over at Fort Lee who loaned them his house. The interior of the house was too dark to take pictures and there were no lights available. As he simply had to have an interior, Sennett moved his friend's furniture out on the lawn and took the "interior" there.

When he came to settle the automobile bill that first day Sennett had to dig up twenty dollars. As the whole payroll of the company only amounted to fifteen dollars at that time, they decided they would have to cut out the automobile. Thereafter the little Keystone company plodded out to work every day in the street cars. And when the actors got to the end of the street car line they went on the human hoof. The cameraman carried the camera over his shoulder and the actors packed the props on their backs. Being very husky by nature, Sennett took to himself the honor and distinction of carrying most of the scenery on his own back....

In September, 1912, Mack Sennett and his players came to Los Angeles and took possession of the studio that had been the original site of the Bison company. The older division of the New York Motion Picture Corporation had removed to Santa Ynez Canyon near the end of 1911. It wasn't much of a studio. A vacant lot, a couple of

dilapidated sheds and a rickety stage were about all. Mack Sennett did most of the work himself. He wrote all the scenarios, lent a hand with the scenery, acted as telephone girl and gateman most of the time. After the day's work as an actor, he came back at night and cut film until early morning.

When Sennett's first California comedy was sent east the verdict was quick and positive. It was punk [i.e. terrible]. Nobody would buy it.

With bulldog tenacity he struggled on. Finally he landed with a comedy in which he had no faith and which was a careless makeshift affair. A Grand Army of the Republic convention happened to be in Los Angeles. Without any very definite idea in mind, Sennett had his cameraman take pictures of this parade. From another company he bought some cast-off battle pictures. He rigged up one of his comedians as a soldier, had him dash in and out of some smoke from a smudge pot and make up a ramshackle comedy out of it. For some reason or other, this was an instant hit. The East demanded more like it.

The Keystone found itself all of a sudden on the map.

The demand for Keystone comedies soon became so great that the one little company couldn't meet the demand. Another company became absolutely necessary. Where were they to get a director and how were they to pay for a director?

Mabel Normand threw herself into the breach. She offered to direct a company herself. Miss Normand, accordingly, became the first woman director of comedies. The actors who worked in her first company say there were occasionally some wild scenes. She was not what you call a phlegmatic director, but she was a good one...

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 11, 1917

" Grace Kingsley

Mabel's Pink Thoughts.

Mabel Normand may be best noted for her limberness in doing picture "stunts" but those who know her best also give the young woman credit for being not only a great reader, of the world's best literature, but for a whole lot of native astuteness of judgment.

Everybody has had a try at guessing why pictures on ancient subjects didn't specially interest the picture fans. Many picture directors have wrung their hands and torn their hair because their favorite pictures depicting Horatius holding the bridge, or the sorrows of some ancient lady of Greece, didn't get over, while the fact that the picture fans refused to get in a welter over the exciting things that happened in old Rome, has caused the loss of many a penny to fatuous producers. Miss Normand has hit the nail on the head.

"Tell you what it is," said Miss Normand, the other day, as she put on her make-up preparatory to some retakes in "Mickey." "The whole secret of public appeal of a picture is that the spectator may be able to put himself or herself into the role of the hero or heroine. This trick of the public imagination is one that must be taken into account. When a young man sees a man on the screen, he can't visualize himself in the role of the hero, if that hero wears queer looking clothes, and lives in a funny looking house and he can't imagine being in love with a lady in Judas all out of fashion. Same way with the girl. Her hero must be all dressed up with some place to go that she knows all about, and she herself must be able and willing to visualize herself in the part of the picture queen, who not only has curly hair and large, expressive eyes, but who wears clothes right up to the minute, too.

* from Mack Sennett papers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

· From contract between Harry Aitken, representing Triangle Film Corporation and Sennett:)
[main points briefly]

Sennett severs ties with Triangle and enters into contract with Paramount for manufacture of Mack Sennett comedies.

Sennett engages Charles O. Bauman[n] for period of three years as his Eastern representative starting Sept. 1, 1917

Paramount procures exclusive rights of distribution 29 June 1917
Paramount-Mack Sennett comedies

Sennett owned one quarter of net profits of Mickey.

He assigns/transfers to Triangle) all right and title to photoplay "Mickey" Sept. 29, for 200,000
June 25, 1917

Triangle gets rights to Mickey.

Sennett gets release from employment with Keystone, N.Y. Motion Picture Co., and Triangle and from obligation to pay salaries.

Harry Aitken signs.

Sennett then enters into agreement with Paramount -- 29 June 1917

* from Mack Sennett papers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

· Excerpt from Court deposition fragment of John O'Donnell, June 30, 1917)¹⁶³

John O'Donnell -- 19 years old -- assembler of positive strips

(F. Richard) Jones told O'Donnell to get four reels of assembled story, conceal it in coat, tell nobody and take it out to his car parked in the alley.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Most of this record, as contained in the Mack Sennett papers, is missing, hence its fragmentary nature here.

¹⁶⁴ Jones had held up release of *Mickey* to Sennett, by absconding with some of its reels. His reason for doing so was withheld back-pay he claimed Sennett and Triangle owed him; based on the argument that during the same length of time he was directing Mickey, he could have earned a good deal more money directing short films. Jones ultimately won his case.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, April 1917

...Mabel Normand, who is next in line, having not only beauty but a charming smile, demonstrates quite charmingly that it is easy to smile and be happy. Mabel has big brown eyes that, in spite of her merriment, never lose their little air of wistfulness, and just lots of black curls. So Mabel smiles and smiles, remembering the Mabel Normand Feature Film Company, and that she doesn't have to bother with making any more slapstick comedies, and be hit over the head with bricks dropped out of aeroplanes, and be ducked in the ocean. Mabel, be it known, is a velvety red dahlia, that queen of the August garden who flaunts her charms so gaily when the other flowers have wilted and faded. Even in the hot sun of slapstick, Mabel was fresh and blooming and radiantly pretty. Therefore the dahlia title!

* from *Variety*, May 18, 1917

Mabel Normand in N.Y.

Mabel Normand arrived in New York Monday and Wednesday evening it was stated she had come East for the purpose of signing up with Goldwyn Pictures.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, June 24, 1917

Spike Robinson, the old-time British fighter, and Stella Dominguez, the beautiful daughter of Ramon Dominguez, wealthy cattle king, were married in Los Angeles recently. Bull Montana, the Italian wrestler, was best man, and Bennie Zeidman and Ed Durling guests. Spike and Bull are in Douglas Fairbanks's company, and the film star presented Spike with a beautiful silver dinner set after the wedding supper. Many well known film personages, including Mabel Normand, Wally Reid, Eileen Percy, Charles Murray, Charlie Chaplin, Ford Sterling, Herbert Rawlinson, James Cruz, Jack Mulhall, Louise Fazenda, Tom Mix, Tom Santschi, Nat Goodwin and others, went to the cafe where the supper was given and danced until the wee small hours to help celebrate.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, July 8, 1917

Goldwyn Sues Mabel Normand

Goldwyn Pictures Corporation has gone to law to uphold the integrity of a contract entered into between a motion picture producing firm and one of its stars.

Suit has been instituted by Goldwyn through Gabriel L. Bess, general counsel for and secretary of the company, and John B. Stanchfield, of Stanchfield & Levy, has been retained as counsel to obtain an injunction preventing Mabel Normand, screen comedienne, from working for any other concern or individual.

Miss Normand entered into a contract and on September 16, 1916, with Samuel Goldfish, according to Goldwyn's contention, whereby she was engaged to be starred in motion pictures under his management for two years at a weekly salary of \$1,000. Under this contract she was to act exclusively for Mr. Goldfish.

Upon the formulation of Goldwyn Picture Corporation by Mr. Goldfish,¹⁶⁵ Edgar Selwyn, Archibald Selwyn, Arthur Hopkins and their associates, Miss Normand's contract was assigned to Goldwyn, Miss Normand was scheduled to begin working for Goldwyn in its studios May 1 and arrived in New York soon after that date, manifesting an immediate intention of not entering upon her contract. Her response to notification as the date of beginning work providing to be evasive, Goldwyn came into possession of information that Miss Normand planned to work elsewhere and for other individuals.

Injunction is sought for two reasons -- first, that she made a valid contract in good faith and should be made to live up to it, and the other that Goldwyn has determined in its own behalf and in behalf of all other production organizations to test through the medium of the courts, the so-called star contracts.

It is alleged in the Goldwyn complaint that Miss Normand, in violating her contract in this or any other similar matter, will inflict upon Goldwyn a monetary loss of \$500,000, and that investments already have been made by the company in costly literary materials fitted to the personality of this particular star and not at all suited to the personality and capacities of any other star because of Miss Normand's specialized type of work on the screen.

* from *Motography*, July 21, 1917

Injunction Against Mabel Normand

Goldwyn Pictures Corporation has gone to law to uphold the integrity of a contract entered into between a motion picture producing firm and one of its stars. Such has been instituted by Goldwyn to obtain an injunction preventing Mabel Normand, screen comedienne, from working for any other concern or individual.

Miss Normand entered into a contract on September 16, 1916, with Samule Goldfish, whereby she was engaged to be starred in motion pictures under his management for a period of two years at a weekly salary of \$1,000. Under this contract she was to act exclusively for Mr. Goldfish.

Upon the formation of Goldwyn Pictures Corporation by Mr. Goldfish, Edgar Selwyn, Archibald Selwyn, Arthur Hopkins and their associates, Miss Normand's contract was assigned to Goldwyn. Mss Normand was scheduled to begin working for Goldwyn in ts studio on May 1 and arrived in New York soon after that date, manifesting an immediate intention of not entering upon her contract. Her response to notifications as to the date of beginning work proving to be evasive, Goldwyn came into possession of information that Miss Normand planned to work elsewhere and for other individuals.

Injunction s sought for two reasons; first that she made a valid contract in good faith and should be made to live up to it, and the other that Goldwyn has determined in ts own behalf and in behalf of all other producing corporations to test through the medium of the courts the so-called star contracts, which some of the celebrities of the screen ignore or violate whenever the whim or notion strikes them.

¹⁶⁵ Goldfish is Samuel Goldwyn, who changed his name to Goldwyn by combining his original last name with that of his partners, Edgar and Archibald Selwyn. That Mabel was in talks with Goldwyn to work for him as early as September 1916, at the same time as she was making *Mickey*, suggests her obvious dissatisfaction with Sennett. The production of *Mickey* under, F. Richard Jones direction, lasted from August 1916 to April 1917 -- an inordinately long time compared to the amount it required to make her later features; which was usually weeks or a couple of months.

It is alleged in the Goldwyn complaint that Miss Normand in violating her contract in this or any other similar manner will inflict upon Goldwyn a monetary loss of half a million dollars and that investments already have been made by the company in costly literary materials fitted to the personality of this particular star, and not at all suited to the personality and capacities of any other star.

* from Mack Sennett papers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

· Telegram dated July 12, 1917 from Sennett to his and Mabel's lawyer, Arthur Butler Graham:

Arthur Butler Graham

Care of Sam E. Rork

Friars Club, NYC

I presume from your wire that is the best thing she can do at present, if Bauman[n] cannot connect with other companies which we talked of before I left for one or two pictures until suit. However I presume that is impracticable. I would advise insisting on a year's contract and making it \$5,000 a week. I feel sure that she can get a still better proposition from them than what you have stated if she only stalls a little longer and you keep up the negotiations with Goldfish. You better read this telegram to her. It shows me that they are very anxious to get her. Therefore it is only necessary for a little more trading and dickering to boost that up. I think you can get the five for the first year and don't think it's wise to give an option unless they want to pay for it, and also make some arrangement that it should be paid in advance in a lump sum. Discuss this with C.O.B. Also would advise very strongly that client takes over services of Rork to watch her interests and publicity. If she connects with them will send deeds and papers, etc., today or tomorrow. Think it best to call my company Emess and have the Mack Sennett comedies make a contract with the above corporation, in that way I will always retain my name.

· Telegram to Sennett from C.O.B. (Charles O. Baumann) to Sennett, July 13, 1917:

[To] Mack Sennett

Graham has read and discussed your telegram with me this A.M. Client [M.N.] absolutely unmanageable and unalterable she refused absolutely to have anything to do with me or yourself in connection with any business proposition. Moreover she is determined to go through with the contract the terms of which Graham has telegraphed you under all circumstances and with out any further delay and moreover threatens unless Graham had contract signed along the lines explained to you that she will without further notice engage other counsel there is no way that Graham can show her your telegram as suggested because of his pledge not to communicate with you nor anyone else in connection with her business affairs. However Graham will use every effort to have Rork connected with her to protect her interests as suggested in your telegram it would even work out badly if you wired her of the information that you have gotten perhaps this is all for the best Who knows

Best Wishes C.O.B.

· Telegram to Sennett from Arthur Butler Graham, July 13, 1917

Shall I incorporate laws Cal. New York or Delaware I suggest NY first, Del second, Cal third but see no substantial objection to any of those states Your telegram received by Bauman[n] and read to me I cannot possibly read your telegram to client and urge you not to telegraph her direct on basis of information received from me I did this in her best interest but if she were now informed it would have serious consequences.

No other possibilities for client except Goldwyn and she would refuse any other offers feeling that Goldwyn gives her the best opportunity from every point of view. She was in my office yesterday afternoon and suggested changes in my draft of contract which I then in her presence and under instructions sent to Goldfish. He agrees to it today without substantial change and will sign next Tuesday on return from Chicago. I have been in touch with Motion Picture business for nearly ten years in negotiations and matching of wits with such judgment as I have acquired I am positive that one year contract could not be made at any price and that I have procured best figure. But if this is not true I am nevertheless unable to stall or bargain because client will not permit it. Will suggest Rork for employment I will call corporation MS Films and not EMess

Arthur Graham Butler

· Telegram to Sennett from "M" [Mabel], July 23, 1917

[To] Mack Sennett

Signed today got Duyn [sic] one year and option. Graham very satisfied said much better than expected start work Sept. 1 company said I didn't look well must rest and go away Until then winter studio Florida So I won't be able to peep at you ever again wanted you to know I signed although you never wire me.

M[abel].

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, July 29, 1917

Goldwyn Gets Normand

Mabel Normand, noted comedienne and the Goldwyn Pictures Corporation last week resumed their briefly interrupted friendship and found the things that kept them apart were, after all, not of sufficient gravity to interrupt their future associations.

This resumption of friendly business relations between one of the biggest stars of the screen and her new employers means that Miss Normand will be at work in Goldwyn's Fort Lee studios within a fortnight.

Mabel Normand signed a contract with Goldwyn last Fall and came East in May to begin work. Temporary differences now adjudicated by Gabriel L. Hess, general counsel for Goldwyn, and Arthur Butler Graham, counsel for Miss Normand, delayed the beginning of her work, but during the intervening time Goldwyn did not hold up its plans for the star. A large amount of literary material had been purchased from well-known authors and the scenario department of Goldwyn buckled now into the preparation of her first two pictures.

Everything that this big new organization can do for a star of Miss Normand's magnitude will be done at once, they say, and henceforth Miss Normand shares in the publicity and promotional campaigns Goldwyn has devised for its artists.

Mabel Normand is one of the greatest comedy stars ever developed in the screen world. She is the pioneer in her field and her work has been distinctive and distinguished. Goldwyn's plans for Miss Normand contemplate giving her even more distinctive comedies than she has done in the past and the technical and artistic facilities which Goldwyn contributes to all of the productions mean much more for this exceptional artist, whose Vogue is as great in foreign lands as it is here at home.

"I have had a splendid vacation, and I am delighted to resume work with Goldwyn Pictures," said Miss Normand.

Announcement will be made soon of the director and staff who are to make Miss Normand's first Goldwyn picture.

* from *Motography*, August 11, 1917

Mabel Normand and Goldwyn Pictures Corporation have resumed friendly relations again and it is expected the little star will be at work in the Fort Lee studios within a fortnight.

Miss Normand signed a contract with Goldwyn last fall and came East in May to begin work. Temporary differences, now fortunately adjusted by Gabriel L. Hess, general counsel for Goldwyn and Arthur Butler Graham, counsel for Miss Normand, delayed the beginning of her work, but during the intervening time plans for the star were not held up. A great amount of literary material had been purchased from famous authors and the scenario department buckled down to the preparation of her first two pictures.

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* from *Motography*, August 18, 1917

A deluge of congratulatory letters and telegrams has followed the announcement that Mabel Normand, comedienne, will begin production under the direction of Goldwyn pictures.

In answer to the question of the kind of literary materials that are to be furnished for Miss Normand, Samuel Goldfish says:

"The Goldwyn Advisory Board has now under consideration a half dozen light comedies by well known authors that are suited to Miss Normand's expression. It is the opinion of our board that Miss Normand can do comedy plays that convey an interesting story in contra-distinction to the comedies that are built upon an unusual situation alone. She is a typical American girl and as such she has built up not only a huge American but an international following as well. We want to star her in a typical American comedies. And these comedies must tell a story."

* from *Motography*, August 18, 1917

Exhibitors throughout the country will be interested to receive herewith the first complete announcement of Goldwyn's accomplished production work. Thus far the completed Goldwyn Pictures are:

Mae Marsh in "Polly of the Circus," by Margaret Mayo

Madge Kennedy in "Baby Mine," by Margaret Mayo

Maxine Elliott in "The Eternal Magdalene," by Robert McLaughlin

Jane Cowl in "The Spreading Dawn," by Basil King

Mae Marsh in "Sunshine Alley" by Mary Rider

Maxine Elliott in "Fighting Odds," by Roi Cooper Megrue and Irvin S. Cobb

Mae Marsh in "Fields of Honor," by Irvin S. Cobb

Pictures now in the making at Goldwyn's New Jersey studios are:

Mabel Normand in "Joan of Flatbush," by Porter Emerson

Madge Kennedy in "Nearly Married," by Edgar Selwyn

Mae Marsh in "The Cinderella Man," by Edward Childs Carpenter

And, early in September, Mary Garden, just returning from France, will begin work in "Thais," by Anatole France.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, September 9, 1917

"Glad To Come Back," Says Mabel Normand

By Agnes Smith.

"Glad to get back? Indeed, I am. Did you ever hear of anyone who has been on a long vacation who wasn't anxious to get back and who wasn't filled with all sorts of new ambitions and resolutions? I have been working since I was 15 years old and I don't think that I shall ever be content to stop."

So spoke Mabel Normand concerning her new affiliation with the Goldwyn company. And she promptly proved her words by beginning last week on "Joan of Flatbush," her first picture with the company.

"As for working in New York," she went on to say, "I am going to like it. Naturally I miss Los Angeles, especially when I wake up in the morning and look out my window and see nothing around me but bricks. Los Angeles is just like a small town -- you live pleasantly, and easily there. But New York is different. You've got to accomplish something to let people know you are alive. So I feel all on my mettle: I have never been more eager to do good work."

Mabel Normand is even prettier and in better spirits than she was when she worked in the East a few years ago. Off the screen she is a surprising person. She is smaller than she appears in pictures and her eyes are two sizes larger than they look in close-ups. Her looks are demure, but chic. Her tastes in books and plays are serious and she doesn't look as though she would venture to cross a street without being duly escorted by a traffic policeman.

There is a fascinating air of solemnity about her; even when she smiles her eyes remain quite grave. She is charmingly sincere and so modest about her work that she will go on extended conversational pilgrimages rather than

talk about it at all. "I am not sure what I am going to do at Goldwyn studio. All that I know is that it will be my best. Porter Emerson Browne wrote a story for my first and it suits me exactly. You know the Goldwyn studio isn't like any place I have worked in before. They have methods of their own and it is like stepping into a new occupation. You can't imagine how curious I am.

"And have you seen their pictures? Isn't Madge Kennedy wonderful? You'd never think that it was her first screen appearance, would you? I wonder how we picture stars would feel if we were to be judged by the first film we ever made.

"It seems strange to me that stage people ever want to go into pictures for good. I can imagine nothing more wonderful than playing to an audience. Think of feeling yourself in direct contact with so many people! All we picture players can do is to sneak into the back row of a theatre and watch the audience look at the shadow of ourselves on the screen. They like your acting and are curious about you, but there is no personal feeling between you."

And there is another mystery of the films that Miss Normand cannot fathom and that is why the craze for eternal youth?

"Do you see why some girls want to stay eternally at the age of 14? Can you understand their objection in growing up? Personally, I don't think that girls are most attractive when they are 14. I shudder to think how little I knew then and how much I thought I knew. Yet there are actresses who would stop the clock at 14. They are limiting their emotional and mental range. And you can't play great music in one octave."

She spoke with all the seriousness of Browning's Rabbi Ben Ezra. And when I looked at the seaside color in her cheeks and the corners of her eyes where the wrinkles might be but aren't, I suddenly realized that this star is somewhere in her early twenties and therefore quite unbiased in her opinion on the disadvantages of youth.

"It's nice to stay young looking," she concluded, "and it's better yet to have a youthful heart. But can you imagine going through life with a 14 year-old brain?"

* from *Janesville Gazette* [Wisconsin], September 27, 1917

DO YOU REMEMBER?

When Mabel Normand was known only as the diving girl and Charles Murray was Hogan in a series of their comedy releases?....

* from *Motography*, October 6, 1917

The thousands of body-weary student officers in the second training camp at Plattsburg, who know little but reveille, beans, drill, beans, drill, beans and taps, were treated to a palatable morsel of diversion this week. Mabel Normand is in camp.

Work driven rookies -- especially those whose lady-folk are far away and to whom weekends mean nothing but Saturday to Monday -- stood about with a pleasantly stunned expression on their countenances and gasped.

Mabel Normand's first comedy for Goldwyn Pictures, "Joan of Flatbush," by Porter Emerson Browne, calls for many martial scenes. In company with Director Charles T. Horan, Mr. Browne, Lawrence McCloskey, of the scenario staff, George Bertholon, Mr. Horan's assistant, and a headquarters staff, the comedienne will spend two weeks on the shores of Lake Champlain.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, October 24, 1917

Mabel Normand Talks For Loan

Mabel Normand made a whirlwind speaking tour to eight New York theatres Monday night, October 22, in behalf of the Liberty Loan, being one of the first screen stars in New York to aid the Government in its drive to raise five billion dollars.

Miss Normand, in full truth, could have begun by saying "unaccustomed as I am to public speaking," for despite her multitude of exploits and film adventures, the star had never before in her life addressed an audience in or out of the theatre. So when eight house managers prefaced their introductions with this statement they were not guilty of press angentry. There is no violation of confidence on the part of one who accompanied Miss Normand to say that in the beginning she was visibly frightened at the prospect of facing audiences, and it was not mock fear that she displayed when she grabbed her various introducers by the hand and held them near while delivering her speech.

Beginning at 6:30 in the evening at Marcus Loew's American Theatre, Miss Normand made a two minute talk first to an audience on the roof-top theatre and a few minutes later met the audience in the main ground floor theatre. Thereafter she averaged one theatre every fifteen minutes, appearing at Mitchell H. Mark's Strand Theatre at 9 o'clock. Miss Normand was welcomed to the Strand by Mr. Mark, Managing Director Harold Edel and house manager Alfred Jones and received a tumultuous ovation from a house capacity audience. Marcus Loew's New York Theatre came next, at 9:15, and was followed by trips to Loew's Circle, Loew's Lincoln and Loew's New York roof. The last stop of the evening was at A. L. Shakman's Eighty-first Street Theatre. Here Miss Normand was introduced to the audience by Mr. Gerald, the house manager, and again the enthusiastic reception given her at other houses was duplicated.

If there was any need of proof of the affection in which Mabel Normand is held by the public this Liberty Loan speaking tour was all that was required. In the course of the evening she faced a total audience from 18,000 to 20,000 persons and the greeting they gave Goldwyn's star showed that her power is as great as ever and that she has retained her place with the public during a year's absence from the screen.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 11, 1917

Mae Marsh and Mabel Normand, Goldwyn stars, were twin attractions at the recent Army and Navy bazaar in Grand Central Palace. For the edification of thousands who thronged the great amusement place, Miss Marsh and Miss Normand posed for the making of a special film so that the crowd might see the actual process of the making of a photo-play. For several hours the spectators were alternately inquisitive, excited and amused. The stars were accompanied to the bazaar by Samuel Goldfish, president of Goldwyn.

* from Mack Sennett papers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

• Telegram from H. Winnik to Sennett, November 14, 1917, New York, NY

Trying to make deal with Davis for Mickey. Davis insists Mickey must be released before Jan. 1st (1918) and asks 200,000 inside six months refusing to consider any other terms because of Triangle contract with you - stop - I want to handle picture but cannot meet his terms - first because time is too short to give picture proper exploitation and with conditions as they are in the country I would not guarantee to get sum he asks and consider it impossible to get anywhere near that sum inside 6 months Will you sell me your claim of 200,000 for 150,000 cash and I can then do business with Davis Please wire me - Broadway NYC. I am sending this wire with Davis permission

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, December 16, 1917

Keeping step with the times, Director George Loane Tucker has decreed that Mabel Normand's newest picture, "Dodging a Million," by Edgar Selwyn and Aubrey M. Kennedy, shall play upon the ice-skating rather than the dance craze. In a supper grotto set for the new picture an ice rink will replace the customary waxed floor. Mabel Normand and Tom Moore, her leading man, will do the skating.

1918

* from *Motography*, January 26, 1918

(Mabel Normand's) unique personality, long familiar to "fans" through her pioneer work in screen comedy, will be seen once more in motion picture theaters on January 28, through a vehicle supplied by Edgar Selwyn, playwright and manager, and A. M. Kennedy, director of productions at Goldwyn studio. It is called "Dodging a Million" and it displays a Mabel Normand clad in silks and ermine.

As a maid in a modiste's shop, Miss Normand learns of a heritage of untold millions which is hers through the death of an unknown Spanish relative. The maid promptly blossoms forth in the richest of Hickson gowns and moves to the Ritz, where a wealthy young man, in the person of Tom Moore, makes her acquaintance.

With the addition of a mysterious stranger, who insists on edging his way into all the heroine's daily comings and goings, the two pursue an eventful career involving a bottle of poison, the cat of a millionaire corset maker, irate bill collectors and the threat of death. The settings provided by the story include a fashionable restaurant where ice skating is the vogue, a glimpse of the Russian Ballet at the Metropolitan Opera House, a complete Fifth Avenue modiste's shop with mannequins and frocks galore, and a battery of express elevators. The director is George Loane Tucker.

* from *Picture-Play*, February 1918

The Girl on the Cover

Mabel Normand discloses a new plan for making magnates laugh.

By Norbert Lusk

"I love dark windy days and chocolate cake." Miss Normand announced with perfect gravity, "and storms, when houses blow down."

There was no hint of mischief or make-believe in the famous Normand eyes. They are even lovelier than the screen ever discloses, and the lashes curl upward more than the film can let one see.

"Chocolate cake." She went on, "is the one thing I never get. People always keep it from me. That's why I have decided it is my favorite food."

"But I never eat it - or anything else - when I am acting. Food makes me too contented." She yawned lazily over her coffee. "And I don't want to be lazy any more. A year of rest is enough for any one. Now I want to come back - *hard*."

The comedienne was reminded that she had no place to "come back" from - that she has stayed in the affections of the film fans every since the early days of Biograph, where under direction of Griffith and Sennett, she had rollicked her way into their hearts through her boisterous comedy.

That - it will be remembered - was her introduction into the world of film - a long step from studying art, which first brought her to New York from her home in Atlanta, Georgia.

Her innate sense of the comic combined with personal charm and genuine acting ability, first gave her recognition and her return to Goldwyn pictures has been eagerly awaited.

Because of that sense of the comic, Mabel Normand cannot be serious wholeheartedly. If she casts down her eyes, it is to shut out a demure parting glance. If she closes her lips tightly, the corners go up, and you know she is laughing silently. She is the true spirit of mischief. Early in the chat, her interviewer gave up all hope of putting a question to her - or, rather, of recording an answer.

For no reason at all, the comedienne began to tear a daisy apart, petal by petal. "I adore daisies," she declared, with closed lids and head tilted to one side. "They are my favorite flowers when I visit a flower shop - alone. If I am accompanied - by a man - I just love orchids." The diminutive actress looked significantly at the inexpensive flowers in her hand. "But, of course, orchids are really too 'vampish' for me. And then," she said pointedly, "brings us to the subject of Retribution with a capital R." Miss Normand's audience of one got in readiness for a tragic interlude.

"I mean vampires, especially screen 'vamps.' They have taught me a great life lesson. Retribution always pounces on the purple lady toward the end of the picture. She gets exactly what she gives. That's why I decided to be good."

"Don't you think motion pictures educate the masses? See how the vampire lady made me be good!" The brown eyes were raised in childish appeal - then sparkled roguishly.

"Tell me this, if you can. Why do plays called 'The Drama of a Woman's Soul' always mean that the woman gets the worst of it in the end? Why is that?" Miss Normand waited for an answer to her quaint questions. "You didn't know I went in for deep thinking, did you? Don't be afraid. I never go deeper."

"People don't laugh enough. Especially men, when they get middle-aged, and very important, and wear fur coats and silk hats in the morning, and motor to work. They are afraid to laugh for fear people will think they're not on the job. I've made a list of six such men, all captains of industry, and I'm beginning a great drive against dull care. I want to make them laugh. This is how I mean to try."

I am writing each a letter inclosing a photograph of Mabel, posed especially for the man receiving it. They are the funniest pictures of the funniest moments I ever had on the screen. These men must laugh – just once. But I won't be present to see their faces slip. If they do laugh, think how well their day will be started, beginning with the moment they are caught in the act by the butler. The possibilities are enormous. The world may yet have a great deal to thank me for."

Some suggestion was made as to the results of a single break in the demeanor of a grave man, and Miss Normand caught the cue.

"You and suppose each of these men has a daughter or a son. Imagine each father being asked for an automobile or a string of pearls. Don't you know that the child is more apt to get it after papa has smiled than if the gloom had not broken? The young people will owe their gifts to Mabel; the salesman will owe his big order to the same cause, and so on down to the boy that opens the door of the shop. And all for one laugh."

The chance of each grateful magnate sending his benefactress a token of his gratitude did not appeal to Miss Normand at all.

"Not on your life!" she exclaimed. "It isn't done. People enjoy laughter, but they're not grateful for it. They forget. They never forget sadness, or the actor that makes them weep."

"Which reaches the heart more surely, tears or laughter? I wonder if being a cook and making chocolate cakes isn't better than either?"

* from *Motography*, February 2, 1918

Goldwyn stars have been fortunate enough to secure assignments to pleasant South Georgia locations during the recent cold snap -- all but Mabel Normand, who was busily completing the last scenes in "Dodging a Million," with Director Tucker, in spite of the handicaps as to heat, light and other necessities under which Fort Lee, N.J., has been laboring since Christmas.

Mabel Normand is still braving prospects of cold weather. She has just begun work in the great glass studio on a new Goldwyn Picture, as yet unnamed. It will give her a decidedly novel part as either of the other two pictures she has made for Goldwyn, "Dodging a Million" in which Miss Normand plays a dresser in a modiste's shop suddenly transformed into an heiress, or "Joan of Plattsburg," which, as soon as the Federal ban against certain camp scenes is lifted, will show Miss Normand drawn into the war preparations of America.

* from *Moving Picture World*, February 9, 1918

Word of the forthcoming release of Mabel Normand's "Dodging a Million," another George Loane Tucker subject, has brought such enthusiastic response from exhibitors, after private screenings at Goldwyn exchanges, that it is imperative for Goldwyn to follow it up with a second Mabel Normand production as soon as practicable.

Accordingly, a new story has been chosen which will present the comedienne in a role unlike any other essayed by her. It is a tale of a newspaper life combining comedy and thrills, and the role to be assumed by the Goldwyn star is that of a "copy girl," a sort of journalistic ne'er-do-well, whose sudden brilliant "beat" has not yet been given a title.

This story is being directed by Clarence G. Badger, brought from the West Coast for this undertaking.

Tom Moore is Hunter Mason, a rich young religious enthusiast who conducts a bowery mission. His own secretary is a crook, and much of the excitement comes when Patsy (Mabel Normand), masquerading as a criminal, discovers and unmasks the secretary.

Charlotte Granville is given the part of Hunter Mason's mother. Helen Dahl is another player recruited from the highest class of stage productions.

Louis R. Grisel, Williard Dashiell, Lincoln Plumer and Wallace McCutcheon are other well-known players in the cast.

* from *Variety*, March 8, 1918

THE FLOOR BELOW

Goldwyn made an error in judgment in selecting a melodramatic scenario for the use of Mabel Normand. It is "The Floor Below," written by Elaine Sterne, directed by Clarence C. Badger, photographed by Oliver T. Marsh. The story itself, while lacking in originality, has a leading role anything but soubrettish, and Miss Normand invests it with her very charming "cutey-cutey" personality. Considerable time and expense was expended in the production, the cost, the photography, and so on, but it is asking too much to expect one to believe that daily newspaper would employ a fluffy-haired girl as copy boy, stand for her shooting craps in the city room, play a harmonica and perform numerous other ridiculous stunts during business hours. Having done all this and been fired for it, she is, at the suggestion of one of the reporters, detailed to assist in unraveling a series of robberies, runs into a young and wealthy mission worker, is believed by him to be a burglar, taken to his mother's home to be reformed, where she again proceeds to cut up capers, the young man's fiancée loves another and steals; little cutey is accused and believing it will hurt the man who had been kind to her, stands for the accusation. The visualization of mission life and the interiors of the man's fashionable home are excellently depicted, the photography is superfine in the matter of clarity, numerous types have been carefully selected; there are well-drawn illustrated titles.(Jolo.).

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, March 10, 1918

According to that very interesting informer, the Goldwyn Press Sheet for "The Floor Below," its star, Mabel Normand, never wears gloves, either on the screen or off. It isn't an economy measure, nor a fad, but an

intelligent habit. She doesn't believe in them. And that isn't the only confession the press sheet makes. She dotes on chocolate cake. This announcement will probably enable her to start a chocolate cake store, as the result of the generosity of enlightened "fans."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, March 14, 1918

Mabel Normand Returning

Mabel Normand is at present on a train bound from Tampa, Florida to New York, and will arrive some time today. With her are Joe Smiley, Robert Elliot and George Loane Tucker. The company has been in the South taking a number of harmless scenes to incorporate into "Joan of Plattsburg" in place of those taken at Plattsburg last Summer and objected to by the Government. About two more weeks will be consumed at the studio in Fort Lee and then Tucker's connection with the Goldwyn Corporation will come to an end.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, March 17, 1918

Instead of employing individual maids at the Goldwyn studio, Mae Marsh, Madge Kennedy and Mabel Normand now use one jointly. The difference in salary they contribute to various war relief organizations, the amount being deposited weekly and distributed according to agreement.

* from *Motion Picture Classic*, April 1918

"Dodging a Million" with Mabel Normand

The Classic's Extra Girl Answers the Phone, Sells Cigars and Stays Up All Night

By Ethel Rosemon

"Can you act?"

"Yes, indeed," I had responded, for you can all bear witness that I have been acting all over the pages of the Classic for the past ten months. I had visions of a chance to emote or mayhap vamp over foot after foot of celluloid. Was at last that elusive young animal, Opportunity pecking at my shoelaces?

"Report at our Fort Lee studio at nine-thirty tomorrow morning as telephone-girl at the Ritz-Carleton in Mabel Normand's picture, Dodging a Million."

But what opportunity would a telephone-girl have to emote, and if she vamped when she called "1492 Columbus" the screen would not reproduce her dulcet tones? However, even telephone girls have been known to grab fate at the switch, so I accepted, with one eye on Mr. Klauber and the other on the check he was handing me.

Being engaged as a "hello girl," I naturally found myself behind the cigar counter. This happens once in a lifetime and then only on the screen. When Goldwyn's busy little carpenters gave birth to a replica of the famous hotel at the studio, they found the switchboard was one of the things that the movie fans would take for granted without hearing it buzz in the picture, so they naturally dispensed with it and set the operator to work behind the cigar-counter, much to the chagrin of said operator.

My dressing-room companions were a little girl who was taking her first dive into pictures, a gorgeous brown-eyed creature with the face of a vamp and the heart of an angel, and Minnie Metho of concert fame, who was playing one of the grande dame roles, but who, in spite of that fact, was not above being on reminiscing terms with the "extra ladies" of the dressing-room. We all gave her a prolonged vote of thanks for the stories of the days when she and Mary Garden were fellow students, first in Chicago and then in Paris. It was thrilling to hear the little reverential touch she gave the "Mary," especially since the dear lady who made perfume famous was within earshot of the dressing-room. It was also well that she and Mary had been fellow students, for with what other stories could we have whiled away those hours so advantageously? Rome was not built in a day. The Goldwyn Ritz was, but it was night before it was finished. After we had made merry over the dinner table, not to mention the frankfurters and sauerkraut, Dan O'Brien's voice calling, "Mr. Tucker's people on the set!" resounded through the corridors, and we made a wild scramble for the stage, as eager for work as a while before we had been for dinner.

When we had been "placed," and my cigar-counter had taken the semblance of personal property, the heroine of the day, or rather the evening, made her entrance. I have read somewhere of a youth whose daily custom it was to hang upon the words of his innamorata. When I finish this story I am going to write said youth that Mabel Normand's eyelashes would be a far safer *modus suspendi* than innamorata's words, which today are and tomorrow are as if they were not. Somewhere in far-off Egypt there may be a mummy with longer eyelashes that curl in a more alluring way than Mabel's, but then Egypt and said mummy have survived all these years without having the imprint of my petite foot upon the former or the gaze of my clear brown eyes on the latter. And speaking of eyelashes, Egypt, mummies, petite feet, etc., reminds me that every one at the studio, from extra girl to director, hails Mabel as a mighty good fellow. A player who had just been promoted from extra to bits, confided to me his opinion of his "chief support" on the trip from the ferry to the studio.

"Why when I have scenes with her she tells me to make the most of them and never mind her," he said. "She had often turned away from the camera so that I could face it. Perhaps you haven't worked much with stars," he added, importantly. "There's only one other I know that would give away an opportunity to dominate a scene, and that one's up in the sky."

And as I watched the lady of the curly lashes, with her cheerfulness and her it's-good-to-be-aliveness, I knew that my street-car confidant had spoken wisely of the Mabel who has brought laughter to millions during her screen career.

"How's the baby?" was the first question she asked of one of the stage crew who was putting the finishing touches to the set.

"No better, no worse," he answered, with a look of gratitude.

"Are you sure you have a good doctor? Now, if you haven't, I'll send mine down to see the baby. He's splendid. Tomorrow --"

"Mabel, we're waiting," Mr. Tucker interrupted, and she was off to work.

But why report at second hand when I had personal evidence of the star's thoughtfulness that very afternoon? I had stolen upstairs to the studio to watch some scenes she was doing. It was slightly chilly. Picture companies seem to be able to produce anything from Heaven to Holland, but they couldn't bring forth an extra supply

of coal that day, no matter how many times Mr. Tucker called "Camera!" and how hard Ollie Marsh, the camera-man, turned the crank. Frozen or melted, though, I am always forced to obey Friend Editor's command "to hang around the star as much as possible." I am considered long-suffering (by some), but once or twice I gave vent to a little shiver, not so much with the cold that was slowly congealing my spinal column-the same one that had been pierced by Mr. Klauber the previous day-as with the thought of Miss Normand's attempt to play polar bear in a sheer evening-gown. She caught the shiver, I can't say whether on the first or second round, and when the scene was ended, picked up one of her sweaters that was reposing off-stage and wrapped it about my shoulders. I had already taken Mr. Marsh, the general still camera-man, into my confidence and had entrusted my faithful graflex to his tender care. He snapped the wrapper and the wrapped...

"Do your eyes hurt?" Miss Normand called after me when she saw me blinking my way down the corridor. "Come around to my room and let me give you something to help them," and she presented me with a bottle of eye-lotion just as girl to girl, not as star to extra.

"Next car three-twenty," some one maliciously announced when we had all gathered in the Goldwyn reception hall.

"Three-twenty? Oh, what will Jack say?" a married extra groaned.

"Well, why doesn't Jack send the limousine, Gwendolyn?" one of the former hotel clerks laughed. "With your combined salaries you ought to have a night and day car."

"Do you know there are moments when I don't love you?" Gwendolyn replied, haughtily.

"I smell coffee. Let's raid the lunch-room," a hungry Ritz-Carlton bellboy suggested.

"Anyway, we can sit there even if we can't eat," was a grand dame's inspiring contribution to the general conversation.

Sure enough the coffee was no camouflage, but as I don't indulge, it made no impression upon my tired digestive system.

"Ye gods, Columbus, where hast thou been?" someone shouted, as one of the guest appeared in the kitchen doorway clutching a huge slice of rye bread.

With a dramatic gesture he indicated the source of supplies, and there was a general exodus in that much to be desired direction.

"What are you doing in this kitchen?" The voice came through the doorway, as did also the form of the night watchman of the Goldwyn Pictures Corporation. The extras, like so many scampering mice, disappeared without further parley.

"Almost time for the car," emptied us from the lunch room into the road outside the studio.

Suitcases were turned on end and weary members of the celluloid clan sat in rows with faces turned towards the road down which the car came-eventually. Cuddled up in corners of the three-forty-five we found brave adventurers who had hoped to play a joke on the river by walking through snowdrifts to the ferry to catch an earlier boat. At five-thirty the streets of gay Brooklyn greeted my tired gaze. My poodle opened the door with:

"Glad to see you back, but why so early, old dear?"

* from *Exhibitor's Trade Review*, April 27, 1918

Mabel Normand Scores Germans in Dinner Talk

Mabel Normand, the Goldwyn star, delivered a patriotic address in the parlor of the Hotel Mason, at Jacksonville, Florida, the other night. About thirty-five officers from Camp Johnston with hundreds of hotel guests listened to Miss Normand score the Germans. The star had the army officers as her guests at dinner, but the cheering that followed her after-dinner remarks brought the hotel guests flocking to hear the balance of her speech.

Miss Normand was in Florida to retake a number of scenes for "Joan of Plattsburg," and finding one of her Plattsburg soldier-officers at Camp Johnston, she insisted on having a party

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, April 28, 1918

The appearances of screen stars in the interests of the Liberty Loan drive are becoming more frequent as the need for patriotic response grows greater, but rarely has an idol of the cinema faced an audience under more exciting circumstances than marked the visit of Mabel Normand to the Harlem Grand Theatre last Sunday night.

The house was filled. Manager Arthur Hirsch estimated the attendance to be 4,000. John Case, representing the Forty-third District of the Liberty Loan Committee, announced that Mabel Normand, star in Goldwyn pictures, had consented to appear.

Then Mr. Case delivered his appeal and Miss Normand was the first to answer, subscribing for a \$5,000 bond. Her reward for this was cheers, after which a few subscriptions for smaller amounts came in. Eight-year-old Clarice Boehm sang a patriotic song and a few more hundred dollars came from the audience. But it was not until Miss Normand seized upon a better method of coaxing money from the audience that expectations were realized: "Ladies and gentlemen," she cried, "if it means anything at all to you, I will give any one who subscribes for a bond of any amount -- for a kiss!"

Mr. Hirsch and his assistants found difficulty in averting a panic, the noise of these eager to see and those eager to be kissed adding to the pandemonium. Finally some semblance of order was restored and the resourceful Miss Normand was held to her bargain. Never mind how many osculations were the price she paid, nor how many cheers, cries and whistles punctuated each kiss. The result is more important. Twelve thousand five hundred dollars was the total, all the more notable when it is remembered that the amount, except for the star's initial \$5,000, represented the savings of people of modest means.¹⁶⁶

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, May 5, 1918

Mabel Normand Devotes Spare Time To War Work

¹⁶⁶ Taking place as this did at about the time or just before the nationwide influenza epidemic, it is not inconceivable that Mabel contracted illness from this repeated close-contact with public.

In common with others at the Goldwyn studios, Mabel Normand follows the fortunes of war, both as the Allies fight on the battlefield of France, and as we prepare our men for service abroad. With her brother, Claude Normand, now at Spartanburg and with many friends in the service it is not to be wondered that the star is a patriot and a worker for the cause.

She is tireless in her response to the numerous requests she gets from men in uniform for everything from a photograph to a chocolate cake. Every one seems to know that she dotes on that delicacy. Some of her correspondents suggest that chocolate layers should be her war sacrifice -- to them. But Miss Normand takes it rather seriously and is happy to grant every request.

Her donations of cigarettes have become so constant that now she merely sends the written request to a tobacconist, who forwards the parcels and relieves her of other details. It is the same with books and pictures of herself.

Recently she listened to the persuasions of a Liberty Loan Committee and consented to appear at a New York theatre, although Miss Normand feels that she is not able to do herself justice as a speaker in public. To bridge this difficulty she promptly offered to kiss any one subscribing for a bond of any amount. Twelve thousand five hundred dollars was raised, chiefly in \$50 and \$100 units.

Following this she was asked by the United States Food Administration to devote her peculiar talents to spreading the propaganda of conservation. With alacrity she made arrangements with Samuel Goldfish, president of Goldwyn, to do a short film showing the comic horror of the housewife who discovers her cook wasting wheat flour in the preparation of pancakes instead of substituting rice, according to her instructions.

* from *Variety*, May 10, 1918

JOAN OF PLATTSBURG

After several delays the much heralded Goldwyn production of "Joan of Plattsburg" with Mabel Normand starred was given a private press showing. It is in six reels, story by Porter Emerson Brown, directed by George Loane Tucker and William Humphrey, photographed by Oliver T. Marsh. Joan is one of the inmates of an orphan asylum near the training camp at Plattsburg. One of the officers lends her a copy of "Joan of Arc," and the wistful, earnest little orphan, a girl whose whole desire is to serve, imagines herself a reincarnated Jeanne D'Arc, an idea which lends itself admirably to double exposure and other tricks of photography. While seated in the cellar reading "Joan of Arc," the orphan hears voices plotting against the government, which she imagines are from another world, but which are in reality spies plotting against our government, and is thus the means of frustrating the sale of government secrets, and incidentally winning the captain as a husband.

A very pretty idea, artistically worked out by the producers, but lacking in the most necessary essential, i.e. spirituality of the star. Miss Normand acquits herself capably in all the comedy visualizations, but when it becomes necessary for her to transform herself from materialism to spirituality, she "isn't there." In other words, Miss Normand is always a physical being, and you can't forget that for a moment, and you cannot imagine her spiritually transformed. It is a fine thought, the production is a pretentious one and an effective musical setting has been added. "Joan of Plattsburg" will please and entertain patrons, not sensationally so, but very nearly.

* from *Motography*, May 11, 1918

The appearance of screen stars in the interest of the Liberty Loan are becoming more frequent as the need for patriotic response grows greater, but rarely has an idol of the cinema faced an audience under more exciting circumstances than marked the visit of Mabel Normand, Goldwyn star, to the big Harlem Grand Theater, in East One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street, New York, last Sunday night.

The house was packed to the doors. Manager Arthur Hirsch estimating the attendance to be fully 4,000. John Case, representing the Forty-third district of the Liberty Loan Committee, announced that Miss Normand had consented to appear, although hoarseness would prevent her from repeating the speech she had been making in other theatres.

Miss Normand had only to step onto the flag-draped platform to hear - and feel - a great wave of applause booming toward her.

Then Mr. Case delivered a stirring appeal and Miss Normand was the first to answer, subscribing for a \$5,000 bond. Her reward was a volley of cheers, after which a few subscriptions for much smaller amounts came in. Eight-year-old Clarice Boehm sang a patriotic song and a few more hundred dollars came from the audience. But it was not until Miss Normand, with a quick inspiration, seized upon a better method of coaxing money from the audience that expectations were realized.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she cried, "if it means anything at all to you, I will give anyone who subscribes for a bond of any amount -- a kiss!"

There was an immediate uproar. Men, women and children swept down the aisles and people arose all over the house. Manager Hirsch and his assistants found difficulty in averting a panic.

Finally, some semblance of order was restored and the resourceful Miss Normand was held to her bargain. Never mind how many osculations were the price she paid, nor how many cheers, cries and whistles punctuated each kiss. The result is more important; \$12,500 was the total, all the more notable when it is remembered that the amount, except for the star's initial \$5,000, represented the savings of people of modest means. Then came another thrill.

Hardly had Miss Normand kissed her last man than the audience made a dash for the exits, eager to see her enter her motor. Several policemen, aided by Manager Hirsch and his workers, preceded the star and fairly hewed out a narrow lane for her to pass through. But the jam surrounding her machine, with faces pressed against the windows, gave the chauffeur his problem. Of course, Miss Normand got away at last, but the memory of her Liberty Loan reception at Harlem Grand will not get away from her for a long time.

* from *Motography*, June, 1918

In furtherance of its advertising campaign for Mabel Normand's newest Goldwyn picture, "Joan of Plattsburg," Goldwyn has arranged for the publication in more than 200 American and Canadian newspapers of a full-page fiction version of Porter Emerson Browne's story, illustrated with stills from the production.

Mr. Browne himself has prepared the article and Goldwyn has had it prepared for newspaper use in 7 and 8-column-page matrices, which are being sent to all newspapers requesting them.

Goldwyn has directed its branch managers and salesman to make every effort to tie up the publication of the story with the showing of the picture. Theatre owners also will work through newspapers with which they advertise.

* from *Motion Picture*, June 1918

Everybody enjoyed Mabel Normand's return to the screen in "Dodging a Million," but many of the critics made a word note about her inclining toward plumpness, or as one of them puts it, Miss Normand's expressed "avoidupois insinuations." Miss Normand promptly wrote a note to each one, thanking him for calling to her attention to a fact she had not realized before. Now Miss Normand is becoming slimmer every day. Who says the critics aren't appreciated.

* from *Play World*, June 1918

The Tragic Side of Mabel Normand - Obtaining an Interview Under Difficulties

By David Raymond

"Miss Mabel Normand will pretend to be glad to see you when you call on her at four o'clock, Monday afternoon. She will not be acting that day in her new Goldwyn picture, so the art of simulation will be lavished all on you. Miss Normand will pretend perfectly that she is glad you have chosen to seek her out and invade the privacy of her apartment.

"Miss Normand will act precisely as if she never had been interviewed before, and will blush and simper and beg you to publish her latest photograph. In fact, Miss Normand will not be herself at all, for she knows that you will much prefer to write of her as an animated doll squeaking opinions someone else has thought for her, tucked in a doll's house and wearing doll's clothes, lacy and baby blue.

"In return for this perfect interview Miss Normand makes ten stipulations, as follows:

"1. That you do not say she owns gold furniture.

"2. Nor that she is whirled hither and thither in a tufted limousine.

"3. Nor that she has a dog.

"4. That you do not mention the hundreds of letters she receives.

"5. That you do not say she adores acting in pictures.

"6. That you omit descriptions of her clothes.

"7. That you refrain from saying she loves sports and all-outdoors.

"8. That you do not advertise her tremendous war work.

"9. That you do not credit her with interest in sociology and world politics.

"10. That you do not reveal her passion for the works of Edith Wharton, Mrs. Humphry Ward and Joseph

Conrad.

"P.S.--In making these stipulations Miss Normand realizes she is snatching away the props of your profession, for who ever heard of an interview with out at least six of these mainstays? However, if you still wish to come Miss Normand will be at home for ten minutes. Moreover, Miss Normand DARES you to come. Please sign and return, special delivery, if Miss Normand is to reserve the time for you."

The foregoing, typed on thick creamy paper, placed in the uncertain hands of The Photo-Play World's experienced social expert, was not calculated to give him confidence in himself. But regard for Miss Normand's originality was at least established. The agreement signed and dispatched he found himself at the appointed time in the home of Mischievous Mabel, the Naughty Normand. Never mind where the domicile is situated, or if the rugs are pink or blue. Or if the effect is that of Sybaritic luxury or ascetic plainness.

It was her home and it was good to be there. She was seated on a settee, reading The New York Evening Post.

"Hello!--but first excuse me for seeming to wait for you. I know it's bad form for the subject of your interview not to be heralded by a 'secretary' and a couple of maids," said the Normand, tossing aside the paper. I saw what had been absorbing her, a drawing by Fontaine Fox.

"I like that man's funnies," she volunteered, catching my glance. "You don't think I READ the paper, do you?" and she trailed off into merry laughter. "But I do like the dictionary--it looks so well among my other books. They are dummies and the dictionary is the only real thing among them. The cook loves to get the correct spelling of the things she makes."

Miss Normand looked at me out of eyes which need no description to photoplay enthusiasts. They are shadowed by lashes absurdly long and curling. The light shines through these lashes like sunbeams filigreed under a rose-smothered pergola. Her eyes were not a subject forbidden in her manifesto, so I am within my rights in phrasing their beauty after the mode of Elinor Glyn.

"What are your serious interests, Miss Normand, outside the dictionary and the newspaper funnies?"

"Men," she answered, without a moment's hesitation. "I think they're the most serious things in the world. Especially when they tell me how beautiful I am. Then the pathos of their position is so acute I am moved to pity--when I want so much to smile.

"They are also a serious problem when they explain the mistakes made by other men in doing what they themselves know they could do better--such as commanding armies, controlling food distribution and directing my screen production." Whereupon Miss Normand glanced at the clock, a large alarm one, standing on her writing desk, and continued.

"One feels kindly toward such men--all men, in fact"--this last with a merciful, Portia-like smile -- "because they are so serious and because they are such an important element in life. One can't escape them: they are everywhere. Why, only this morning a man called to manicure me. Now, that we have women munitions workers and women conductors and elevator operators, one feels that men will get their chance in professions from which they have been barred."

"But Miss Normand," I put in, anxious to touch upon a less gloomy topic, "what is causing you to smile these days? After your happy return to the screen in 'Dodging a Million' you must find much to make you lighthearted."

"Nothing more delicious than my collections of sayings uttered by friends among film stars." With this she went over to her desk. Mabel Normand's walk is something I have long delighted in. It is a gay, impudent kind of walk. She does not swing along, or mince, or skip. She saunters in the inimitable manner of the Mabel Normand. She brought back a kid-bound book.

"This is what amuses me most--the commonplaces voiced by people who should know better. Take this for example. 'I think woman's highest destiny is motherhood and the home,' which was confided to me by a certain internationally famous woman. And, 'every woman uses her sex in one way or another.' I love that just as I love the girl who made the discovery, another experienced star. 'What is there to write of poor little me?' is one of the best in my collection. The speaker is a girl who is always glad to give the newspapers more copy than they ever can use."

Miss Normand closed the book with a snap.

"No, I can't tell you who the speakers were. That would make the remarks too funny to be good for you."

Determined to get at the real Mabel Normand, the girl whose sober thoughts must be as interesting as her merry moods, I asked a question.

"Nothing in the world is more vital to me at this moment than--chocolate cake," she declared. "I am expecting a four-storied one from the only shop I trust--or that will trust me. But there is a maddening doubt in connection with it." I looked concerned.

"Will it or will it not, I ask myself," she went on, "be iced on the sides as well as the top? The sugar shortage forces economy and I have been warned to expect the worst."

At this moment the clock burst into shrill alarm. It wobbled over the mahogany surface of the desk.

"Your ten minutes--" Miss Normand announced, smiling cordially and rising to her full height of five feet, "are up. Please go. I must be alone when the chocolate cake arrives. With great sorrows or great joys I seek solitude. I am not like other girls, you understand."

There was nothing to say then; there is nothing more to say now. Except that Mabel Normand's manner was serious throughout the interview.

* from *Moving Picture World*, June 8, 1918

In *The Venus Model*, her latest Goldwyn picture, Mabel Normand appears in a production replete with movement, interest and unusual beauty. And in the person of the sprightly star all these elements of success are concentrated, although the production in itself is unique.

Settings of unusual richness and beauty have been devised by Hugo Ballin. They range all the way from a shop window simulating a sand strewn beach, where Mabel Normand poses in a chic bathing costume, to a restaurant where living birds are used in great numbers for decorative purposes. They are not caged, but are grouped on branches of trees set in niches in the walls. Love birds, parakeets and Java sparrows are used, with some magnificent parrots hanging in ornamental rings. The effect is original with Mr. Ballin, and is an outstanding feature of the production.

From another standpoint the bathing suit factory is equally interesting, with its array of dummies clad in the garb of the beaches. The scenes which show the chute down which boxes are shot for shipment are highly diverting. When the star herself elects to shoot the chute and slides down head first at high speed audiences are assured the heartiest laugh of the season.

A child, a little girl named Nadia Gary, contributes almost as much as Miss Normand to *The Venus Model* with her beauty and sympathetic acting. She is the first model on whom Mabel Normand fits the bathing dress she has designed--the costume which brings the star success and love and exciting adventures.

Much of the excitement for the audience will be found in the episodes in the shop window and around it. A great crowd surrounds the place, drawn there by the promise of seeing the wonderful "Venus Model." When Mabel Normand appears clad in the already famous swimming suit she creates a sensation. That sensation fortunately is not confined to the shadow people on the screen, but spreads to the audience in the theater.

* from *Motography*, June 8, 1918

Dodging a Million with Mabel Normand (Goldwyn) -- Excellent production. The star is A1 with us. The picture got us some money and in return gave entire satisfaction -- Gem Theatre, Crystal Falls, Mich.

The Floor Below with Mabel Normand (Goldwyn) -- Good. My audience enjoyed this picture very much and commented on it nicely. -- Columbia Theatre, Buffalo, N.Y.

The Floor Below with Mabel Normand (Goldwyn) -- Star good. Story pleasing. Put her in some society comedy dramas. -- Imperial Theatre, Zanesville, Ohio.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, June 9, 1918

President's Wife Meets Film Star

Mrs. Woodrow Wilson asked that Mabel Normand be brought in her box at Crandall's Knickerbocker Theatre in Washington that the first lady of the land might speak to the star of "Joan of Plattsburg." It happened last Tuesday, when Goldwyn's patriotic comedy-drama was presented in aid of the Children's Year Campaign Committee of the Council of National Defense, an organization devoted to the welfare of babies. Miss Normand was in Washington at the direct invitation of this organization, of which Mrs. Wilson is the chief patron.

The audience, one of the most distinguished ever assembled to see a motion picture and meet the star of it included, besides Mrs. Wilson, Vice-President Marshall, Secretary of War Baker and Mrs. Baker, Mrs. Josephine Daniels, wife of the Secretary of the Navy, and various other ladies of the Cabinet as well as Army and Navy officials and leaders on war work.

Among other things Mrs. Wilson said to Miss Normand, according to a Goldwyn official: "I have always loved you in motion pictures. You have whiled away many a dull hour for me, and now love the real Mabel Normand even more." Miss Normand was asked questions about her work, and for ten minutes she and the President's wife chatted before the performance began.

Captain Barris Bulkley opened the matinee with a stirring recital of "The Star Spangled Banner" and then the lights went down and the first scene of "Joan of Plattsburg" faded in on the screen. Midway in the picture, Mrs. Blanche Shipert, a singer well known in Washington, sang "Joan of Arc" and moved the audience to heart applause, repeated as picture gained in cumulative strength. When finally the end came and Captain Bulkley appeared to introduce the big audience knew what was coming and applauded some more, and when the star of "Joan" emerged from behind the curtain it was a full minute before she could make herself heard.

Addressing herself to the center box, in which Mrs. Wilson sat, Miss Normand told the audience how happy she was to be in Washington for the first time and how deeply she appreciated the honor paid her by the Children's Year Campaign Association in asking her to make a personal appearance.

Previous to this Mrs. Wilson had made known to Manager Robb that she would like to say au revoir to the star, and in the lobby of the Knickerbocker, surrounded by the crowd, most of them Mrs. Wilson's personal friends, the wife of the President expressed her enjoyment of Mabel Normand's work to the star herself.

"It is a charming, most interesting play and I enjoyed it because 'Joan of Plattsburg' is different," she said. "You are delightful in the part and I hope to see you many times."

Miss Normand could only murmur her thanks.

But this was not the end of her Washington triumph. After a long drive Miss Normand began her series of personal appearances at six of the Crandall theatres. At each house she was greeted by crowds willing to forego seeing the remainder of the performance that they might follow Miss Normand to the street and press around the motor to beg for photographs. One gallant youth snatched off his cap and kissed Miss Normand's hand in true Southern style.

It was an interesting experience for Mabel Normand, unaccustomed as she is to making appearances in person, and proof of her appeal to Mrs. Wilson and her friends as well as to the children who had spent their pennies to see her, will remain in Miss Normand's heart always.

"It means," she said to a Goldwyn executive who accompanied her, "that I must do my best work in every production. Now I realize how much is expected of me, and I do so want to live up to my reputation."

* from *New York Times*, June 17, 1918

Revive A Threadbare Subject

After seeing this naval film, it is difficult, perhaps, to be tolerant with the Strand's feature photoplay, "The Venus Model," with Mabel Normand in the leading role. The thing is so emphatically a product of the restricted field from which, through the war, the moving pictures have been unable to escape. The story is about a phenomenon in the form of a working girl who designs a wonderful bathing suit, thereby saves her employer from failure, falls in love with the son of said employer, rescues him from the clutches of an unscrupulous female to whom he had indiscreetly written letters, and finally marries him and happiness forever.

* from *Variety*, June 28, 1918

THE VENUS MODEL

Mabel Normand is starred in this Goldwyn, at the Strand. It is the usual story of virtue triumphant, vice punished and everything straightened out, but the old theme is delightfully handled and the feature is entertaining.

Miss Normand is a screen artist of ability, who never tries for effects and is always amusing. As Kitty O'Brien, a girl who works in a bathing suit factory, always cutting up pranks and annoying the crabbed old foreman, she is a delight. But she is even better when promoted as a reward for designing "The Venus Model," and in consequence is made general manager of the factory.

The firm is in straightened circumstances and through illness caused by worry, the proprietor is ordered away and Kitty O'Brien is left in full charge. Under her management the business prospers to such an extent that when the owner returns, instead of being in debt, there is a big balance on the right side of the ledger and he is able to pay off all his creditors.

In the absence of the owner, a young man applies for a position, is made office boy, and turns out to be the boss' son, who after leaving college, decides to make his start from the bottom of the ladder. This young man, Rodrique La Rocque, is a clever actor. He at once becomes smitten with Kitty, who, in turn, likes "the fresh office boy" to whom she is paying \$6 per.

Alfred Hickman is the villain, so completely routed by Kitty's impudence, that he is more to be pitied than despised, as all villains should be. She also foils the machinations of the "vamp" (Una Trevelyn) in her own peculiar way.

"The Venus Model" is a pleasing story, well done and should make a first class program feature.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, June 30, 1918

A Feminine George Washington

Mabel Normand is a stickler for truth-telling. She will not equivocate even when asked a question she has a right to refuse to answer. On her recent trip to Washington, where she met Mrs. Woodrow Wilson at a performance of "Joan of Plattsburg," a child asked the Goldwyn star her age. "Honey, I'm as old as there are scenes in 'The Venus Model,' divided by twenty and multiplied by two. Here's a nickel for a pencil and write me the answer."

* from *Photoplay*, July 1918

· From interview with Mary Pickford in Chicago:
"I saw Mabel Normand in New York -- I love Mabel."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, July 21, 1918

Her Gingham Gifts

On her recent trip to the blue ridge mountains of West Virginia, where she went to take scenes for "Back to the Woods," her forthcoming Goldwyn picture, Mabel Normand encountered a phase of life new to her. She learned to know many women of the mountains, most of whom had service flags in the windows of their cabins like the one

Mabel cherishes for her brother. Despite their poverty, she was surprised to find the mountain women too proud to accept money from her. So she sent a box of plain Gingham dresses on her return to New York.

* from *New York Times*, July 22, 1918

The photoplay at the Strand this week is "Back to the Woods," with Mabel Normand in the leading role and Herbert Rawlinson supporting her. It's an average photoplay, which means that it has some well-done scenes, is fiction that never approaches fact, and is tediously long.

* from *The New York Clipper*, July 31, 1918

Mabel Normand was fined \$2 in traffic court last week for driving her car on the wrong side of the street.

* from *Pictures and Picturegoer*, August 1918

Storms, Chocolate Cakes, and Vampires Her Delight!

"I love dark, windy days and chocolate cake," Mabel Normand announced with perfect gravity," and storms when houses blow down."

There was no hint of mischief or make-believe in the famous Normand eyes. They are even lovelier than the screen ever discloses, and the lashes curl upward more than the film can let one see. We had called to interview the popular little lady for PICTURES, but ten minutes had passed and so far we had not been able to put to her a single question. She did most of the talking.

"Chocolate cake," she went on, "is the one thing I never get. People always keep it from me. That's why I've decided it is my favourite food.

"But I never eat it--or anything else--when I am acting. Food makes me too contented." She yawned lazily over her coffee. "And I don't want to be lazy any more. A year of rest is enough for any one. Now I want to come back--really back!"

We expect you know that Mabel is now a Goldwyn comedienne; the Stoll Film Company will in due course release her first Goldwyn picture, "Dodging a Million," in which our Mabel makes a welcome return to the screen. We reminded her that she had no place to "come back" from--that she has stayed in the affections of picturegoers ever since the early days of Biograph.

Because of her innate sense of the comic, Mabel Normand cannot be serious wholeheartedly. If she casts down her eyes, it is to shut out a demure parting glance. If she closes her lips tightly, the corners go up, and you know she is laughing silently. She is the true spirit of mischief. Early in the chat we gave up all hope of putting a question to her--or, rather, of recording an answer.

For no reason at all, the comedienne began to tear a daisy apart, petal by petal. "I adore daisies," she declared, with closed lids and head tilted to one side. "They are my favourite flowers when I visit a flower shop--alone. If I am accompanied--by a man--I just love orchids." The diminutive actress looked significantly at the inexpensive flowers in her hand. "But, of course, orchids are really too 'vampish' for me. And that," she said pointedly, "brings us to the subject of Retribution with a capital R.

"I mean vampires, especially screen 'vamps.' They have taught me a great life lesson. Retribution always pounces on the purple lady toward the end of the picture. She gets exactly what she gives. That's why I decided to be good.

"Don't you think motion pictures educate the masses? See how the vampire lady made me be good?" The brown eyes were raised--then sparkled roguishly.

"Tell me this, if you can. Why do plays called 'The Drama of a Woman's Soul' always mean that the woman gets the worst of it in the end? Why is that?" Miss Normand waited for an answer to her quaint question. "You didn't know I went in for deep thinking, did you? Don't be afraid, I never go deeper.

"People don't laugh enough. Especially men, when they get middle-aged, and very important, and wear fur coats and silk hats in the morning, and motor to work. They are afraid to laugh for fear people will think they're not on the job.

"It is my task to make even these unfortunates laugh, but I don't expect a lot of thanks. People enjoy laughter, but they're not grateful for it. They forget. They never forget sadness, or the actor who makes them weep.

"Which reaches the heart more surely, tears or laughter? I wonder if being a cook and making chocolate cakes isn't better than either?"...

Mabel Normand is superstitious. She always carries a tiny ivory elephant as a talisman.

Though she never wears them on the screen, she owns wonderful jewels. Her favourite is a chain of diamonds suspending the smallest platinum watch in the world.

Raymond Hitchcock and Mrs. Hitchcock (Flora Zabelle) are her closest friends. They advise her whenever she considers a contract.

She is very fond of beautiful clothes and means always to wear pretty things on the screen in future as in "Dodging a Million."

In spite of her merry smile and laughing eyes, Mabel is very temperamental. Trifles trouble her and she weeps with any friend who tells a hard luck story.

Her ambition is to go to Paris after the war for two years. She declares she wants to study languages and music "and things." Then she wishes to appear on the stage, though never has she spoken in public.

* from *Photoplay*, August 1918

Would You Ever Suspect It?¹⁶⁷

All the while she was making slapstick, Mabel Normand was reading Strindberg, Ibsen, and Shaw
By Randolph Barlett

¹⁶⁷ This article is significant in that it reveals Mabel's intellectual interests as having originated years before her close association with William Desmond Taylor.

"Do you rent this apartment furnished?"

This was the only important thing I asked Mabel Normand. And this is why I asked it:

When I called, Miss Normand was quite obviously a very busy young person. A parcel had just arrived and she hurriedly tore off the wrappings and brought to light a collection of men's pocket articles bound in pigskin, including a memorandum book, a photograph case, and such odds and ends. She explained that they were for Father Kelly, the chaplain of a contingent of the American Army, just sailing for France. Miss Normand had received word from her brother, at Spartenburg, that Father Kelly had been very kind to him when he was in the hospital, and would be in New York a day or two before sailing. So Miss Normand was preparing to show her appreciation. This was something that could not wait, so while she went on with her work of doing things up for Father Kelly, I nosed around the living room.

A big book case in one corner invited inspection. The array of authors was as unusual as it was fascinating. There were Gautier, Strindberg, Turgeneff, Stevenson, Walter Pater, Kipling, Oscar Wilde, Shaw, Ibsen, John Evelyn, J. M. Barrie, Francois Coppee, Bret Harte. Of the superficial best sellers there was not a single sample. Nor was there to be found in the room a copy of any of the cheap, current fiction magazines. On the piano was a heap of music in which was to be found Rubenstein but not Irving Berlin, Chaminade but not Jerome Kern, Rimsky-Korsakoff but not Von Tilzer, Kohler etudes but no ragtime.

So when she told me that everything in the apartment belonged to her, I knew that we were going to have more important things to talk about than whether she considered the moving picture still in its infancy, and what her favorite was, and whether she could cry real tears when the director asked her, and so on. In a recent article in *Photoplay* it was observed that the sole secret of enduring success in moving pictures is intelligence. Miss Normand's collection of books has, probably, done little toward making her successful, but they are an index to the possession of that intelligence without which there can be no success. Of course the mere ownership of books may mean nothing except that the owner is an easy prey to salesmen, but when, as with Miss Normand, there is contained between the handsome covers, it means a great deal.

Let there be no mistake about this, however -- Mabel Normand is no high brow. To a person whose mind is not virile and active, association with the masters of literature is fraught with peril. But Miss Normand has that active mind. She does not take her reading like a sponge, but like an electric motor. While she was bumping and splashing her pretty self all over the landscape of Southern California and its well known coast line, in the Fatty and Mabel series of comedies, her mind was developing toward something more important. She was not satisfied to go on forever decorating the slapstick classic. The opportunity came, and Miss Normand was ready to be starred in big features. Still she is not satisfied. From farce she has ascended to comedy, but she knows there are higher rungs of the ladder still unclimbed, and when the next opportunity comes again she will be ready.

That has been her history -- being ready. Not so many years ago, as the calendar counts time, she was living in Staten Island, just down the bay from New York. She wanted to earn her own living, and it was not long before she found a place as a model for artists. Charles Dana Gibson, James Montgomery Flagg, and other noted illustrators, were among her employers. It was not a highly paid profession, and there were times when she walked all the way from Thirty-first Street to Sixty-seventh to save car fare. For the life of the artist's model is widely misrepresented. There isn't much romance in it.

Among Miss Normand's intimate friends of those days were Alice Joyce and Florence LaBadie, also artists' models.

The fact became known to them that it was possible to earn five dollars a day working in moving picture studios. As the income of the model averaged three dollars a day when she was so fortunate as to have engagements both morning and afternoon, this sounded like good news. So one day Miss Normand ventured into the Biograph studio on Fourteenth Street, the very cradle of the modern moving picture.

"I'll never forget it," she says of this adventure. "I had been told to be sure to see Mr. Griffith, and somehow or other I found my way up to the floor where they were working. The lights and the confusion bewildered me. The blotchy appearance of everybody's face, caused by the rays from the light batteries, frightened me. I sneaked off into a corner and tried not to be noticed.

"While I was standing there the most beautiful creature I had ever seen came upon the scene. She was a gorgeous blonde -- I have no idea who it was -- and her golden hair hung clear to the floor like one of the Seven Sutherland Sisters. I knew nothing about makeup and wigs, and I supposed this was all her natural appearance. If that was what they wanted in the movies I knew there was no chance for me. I wanted to get away before anyone saw me and laughed at me.

"As I was going out of the door a man stopped me and asked me if I was looking for anyone. It was Dell Henderson. I stammered that I wanted to see Mr. Griffith, though the fact is, that was the last thing I did want. He told me to wait a few minutes. I tried to get away again and Edwin August stopped me. I evaded him and then Frank Powell came along. Somehow or other, in spite of all my efforts, Mr. Griffith saw me and immediately ordered someone to take me down to the wardrobe room and put me in a page's costume. I suppose it's about the only time any person trying to get into the movies actually made an effort not to see Mr. Griffith.

"Well, they had a terrific time finding a pair of tights small enough for me. They had to twist them into knots to make them fit. And I was horribly embarrassed. Yes -- I know it doesn't sound like the ordinary idea of an artist's model, but I never had posed with so little clothes. They told me to stand still in a certain part of the scene, and I felt my knees wobbling. My legs felt like sticks of well-cooked spaghetti. At last they started work, and it never seemed to end. I don't remember the name of the picture -- all I recall is that the wonderful creature I had seen was a blind sculptress.

"It came six o'clock and I could hear that dear Staten Island ferry calling me, but they wouldn't let me go. I never had been late to dinner, and I knew my mother would be worrying. But they kept us there until nearly ten o'clock. I think they gave me ten dollars for the session, but that was no lure. I never went back. They had told us to come back the next day, but I had no idea that the picture was unfinished, and I didn't want any more."

It was quite a while after this that Miss Normand summoned up courage to try again. The second time she became a member of that company from which came Bobby Harron, Henry Walthall, Mae Marsh, the Gish sisters, Florence Lawrence, Arthur Johnson, and all that long list of screen stars who had their start with D. W. Griffith.

When she was making farce comedies with Roscoe Arbuckle, Miss Normand became known among the players as the most fearless girl in pictures, when there were dangerous stunts to be performed. Nobody ever "doubled" for her. With all her slenderness and petite grace, she had the ill power to go through with anything she attempted. She couldn't bear to be called a quitter. A typical incident occurred just when she recovered from a long illness that kept her away from work all summer, two years ago.

Just before she was laid up, she had been working on the comedy "Fatty and Mabel Adrift," and it had to remain unfinished until her recovery. At last she felt able to go back to the studio, and started out in her car. As she neared Edendale her nerve began to ooze away.

"I can't do it -- I can't," she groaned, and ordered the chauffeur to turn back.

Before she had driven back many blocks, she began to call herself a coward.

"You've got to do it," she kept repeating to herself. "You've *got* to do it."

So the chauffeur was ordered to turn again toward the studio. Three times she ordered him to drive back home, and as many times her Irish blood rose at the thought of submitting to her fear, until at last she fairly whipped herself to her dressing room -- and finished the picture.

Miss Normand's latest presentations, those that draw her away from the slapstick stuff are "Joan of Plattsburg," in which she plays a modern and American Jeanne d'Arc, and "The Venus Model," in which she essays the title role recalling the good old days when she was so well known as the diving girl. Her first picture in her new affiliation gave her the luscious part of "Arabella Flynn," an errand girl, in "Dodging a Million." In the "Floor Below," a newspaper story, she was a copy girl, acting as no copy girl ever acted now or then. But no matter what she does -- romping through a picture and lifting it out of the commonplace, or reading Strindberg, Shaw, or Ibsen after a hard day's work at the studio, Mabel Normand stands all by herself.

* from *Photoplay*, August, 1918

[advertisement for Carnation milk]

Mabel Normand -- tells a new way to use Carnation Milk

Mabel Normand, Goldwyn star, likes to make things to eat. She created something mighty good this time. She takes some cream cheese--such as you might get at your grocers--and blends it with Carnation milk as directed in her recipe herewith. On a lettuce leaf sandwich as the "filling," or with bar de luc currant jam or preserves of any kind--Well, you can take her word for it that's it's worth tasting. See how she looks after the first bite of her sandwich.

Mabel Normand's Cheese Whip

Take a brick of cream cheese; slowly work into it several tablespoons of Carnation milk undiluted. When the cheese has taken up all the Carnation Milk it will hold, add a couple more tablespoons and whip the mixture with a fork until it is light and fluffy. Spread it on sandwiches or serve it with preserves and toast or wafers.

* from *Variety*, August 2, 1918

BACK TO THE WOODS

In "Back to the Woods," shown at the Strand, Goldwyn is putting out as good pictures as one generally sees. Better, in fact. It is a love story in that it deals with the courtship of two persons, but it abounds in farcical situations which make it a comedy appealing more to the sense of humor than the heartstrings. The picture also marks a very distinct advance in the work of Mabel Normand, who is the star. Since the earlier days Miss Normand has been regarded as one of the best exponents of screen comedy and nothing more; the farcical, custard-pie-throwing, knockout comedy which will always appeal to something childish that remains in us. In "Back to the Woods," however, Miss Normand's work is marked by an archness and finesse, a lightness of touch, which stamp her as a comedienne of a much higher rank.

Stephanie Trent who is bored with the men she meets in the East, goes as a teacher -- under an assumed name -- to a primitive village owned by her father, a rich capitalist. Here she meets Jimmie Raymond, a young novelist, who lives in a cabin and dresses much as do the men around him. Neither knows the other's real name. Raymond hires a yokel to annoy Stephanie so that he may have the opportunity of coming to her rescue and protecting her. He then hires the boy to lure her to his cabin where he treats her in a violent unbridled manner. But when she starts to jump through a window he tells her that he is a novelist and simply wants to see how a woman would behave under such circumstances. Stephanie then has several lumbermen blindfold and kidnap Raymond and take him to another shanty, where she tells him that she is a school teacher and simply wants to see how a novelist would behave under such circumstances. She tells him that he must marry her, but he escapes and in the pursuit is shot. And then Stephanie realizes that she cares for Raymond and nurses him back to health. Both return to the city and the first installment of the novel appears in a magazine. Stephanie's father gets an injunction. On their way to the hearing, Stephanie and Raymond meet in the elevator of the building where it is to be held. Raymond throws the elevator man out, and there is an amusing scene where the two go shooting up and down until they both become dizzy and Stephanie capitulates in Raymond's arms.

In Herbert Rawlinson Miss Normand has an admirable foil. He is precisely the kind of man the part calls for, strong and handsome and a good actor. Scenically the picture is quite exceptional, with direction and photography of the same caliber.

* from *New York Times*, August 18, 1918

The Strand runs to farce-comedy this week, with "Upstairs" at the head of the bill. This is a piece of nonsense in which Mabel Normand, under the direction of Victor L. Schertzinger, does some of her best pantomimic work. She takes the part of a kitchen drudge who is lured upstairs to the dancing room of a gay hotel. She is in trouble most of the time and most of her troubles are laughable. There is not enough in this farce, however, to make all of its five or six reels entertaining.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, September 14, 1918

To Give Old Natives a Treat

Attention! all you folk who live in the vicinity of Sea Cliff. There is to be a treat down at the beach tomorrow. Mabel Normand, she of the svelte figure, dark eyes and engaging smile, is going to appear at the beach at Sea Cliff in a one-piece bathing suit. The occasion will be the filming of a scene from "A Perfect Thirty-six," Mabel's next Goldwyn picture. This is the one and only reason Miss Normand has consented to don a bathing suit and do an Annette Kellerman.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, September 20, 1918

Poor Mabel

Mabel Normand is suffering with a terrible cold, and she is willing to tell any one of the thousands of girls who are envying the life of a motion picture star she will swap places. Her next Goldwyn picture calls for a bathing scene, so Mabel and her company packed up their belongings and went to Sea Cliff to take the scene. A terrible storm came up and the little hotel where this company had registered sprung a leak in the roof. Mabel said "Fatty and Mabel" adrift had nothing on this deluge, which like a thief in the night, came without warning.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, September 22, 1918

"Louella Parsons

Mabel's Philosophy

One could imagine nothing better for a chronic case of blues than to have the daily companionship of Mabel Normand. She sparkles one minute like bubbling, effervescent champagne, subdues her sparkles the next with a sage remark that might come from a philosopher, paid to create proverbs. Decidedly, there is nothing monotonous about this queen of comedy lady, who would bring a laugh into the darkest, dullest day and find something worth while on a desert island away from civilization.

An invitation to dine with Miss Normand brought me to her apartment -- as usual fifteen minutes late. I found her about to starve to death and being in the same condition myself, the first thought that came to our minds was -- food.

"Food?"

"Where to find it?"

We went together in search of an eat shop and needless to say we found a good dinner at one of the hotels where Mabel Normand is known and recognized as a real celebrity of the screen.

No royal potentate was ever received with more obsequious attention than this Goldwyn moving picture had thrust upon her.

Must like comedy, and Mabel -- thought I, taking in his admiring glances at the little figure dressed so smartly in a black satin suit, with a big black velvet hat and a fluffy white blouse.

And about Mabel, the tomboy of films. A writer on a moving picture magazine a few months brought back a laugh to picture land by saying Mabel was one of the best read moving picture stars he had ever met. He told how he had gone to her apartment and finding all these books on Russian sociology, profound philosophy and discussions of historical and religious subjects, had naively asked Miss Normand if she rented her apartment furnished.

"Why no, these are all my own books," she answered, pointing to the well fitted bookcase.

An animated discussion embracing the text and subject matter of these volumes disclosed the fact that Mabel Normand was not only well read, but that she had the astonishing knack of remembering what she read.

All of this sounded well, but I admit I was like the rest of the world -- skeptical. It did not seem possible that this girl whom the world expects to do a female Charlie Chaplin for their entertainment could have any serious moments.

I hadn't been with her half an hour before I discovered she had depths to her nature and a serious side which few people who know only her tricks on the screen could believe.

There is at times a look of sadness to her eyes which again are so full of mischief one can scarcely believe she is grown up and out of her teens. Mabel Normand is one of the women who will always be a little girl. Her genuineness, her sympathy and her impulsive affection are given with the unaffected trust of a child, rather than of a woman who has found life to contain many sharp edges.

The last time I saw Miss Normand was in Chicago, when she was coming from the Coast with Fatty Arbuckle. At that time she weighed a scant 98 pounds and looked sick and miserable. The girl whom I met Wednesday night had little in common with the Mabel of that day in Chicago.

This Mabel breathes an air of content and happiness. She likes her work, enjoys the Goldwyn pictures and believes in "Peck's Bad Girl" she has at last found the sort of vehicle in which she is best suited to shine.

"My idea of good screen acting," she said, "is to give myself as I am to the screen. I want to let people know the real Mabel Normand. Take a writer who can express himself in the easy natural manner of his own conversation. He comes nearer the public than the man who borrows all the big words from the dictionary and makes a grandstand play of his knowledge. The same is true of a motion picture actor. The secret of screen success is to let your public see you as you really are, not to camouflage your identity under a mask of disguise and grandeur."

Not bad philosophy when you dissect it.

Mabel Normand has a romance, one that she dreams about and cherishes as a precious memory. She carries it with her and never forgets it for a second. While we were talking she unconsciously fondled -- a little gold vanity bag set with sapphires.

"There must be a secret hidden in you there," I said.

"There is," she promptly replied. "The picture of a man whom I love and who went away."

"Let me see him," I begged.

"All right," she said handing me a tiny snapshot of a handsome youth in Uncle Sam's uniform looking out of a pair of frank eyes.

"Who is he?"

"He is Claude," she said, "and he is fighting in France -- and O but I miss him."

"Claude who?" said I, the old reporter instinct refusing to be downed.

"Oh," said this irrepressible one. "Didn't I tell you Claude Normand, my brother?"

After that we went home. Not to Mabel's own chintz decorated apartment, but to my apartment. She insisted upon driving me home and seeing me inside my home domicile, and after she did this we sat down and finished our conversation right there.

After all it was a good idea. It gave the elevator man a thrill to see Mabel Normand, Goldwyn star, and gave him something to talk about for the remainder of the week.

* from *Variety*, September 27, 1918

PECK'S BAD GIRL

A capital picture and one showing Mabel Normand off to greatest advantage is "Peck's Bad Girl" a Goldwyn feature seen at a private showing. It is not only funny, in a healthy, old-fashioned way, but it is also quite melodramatic in spots and then, by way of variety, a pretty little love element is injected.

Minnie Peck is a very bad girl indeed. She interferes with the hose of the village fire department to the discomfiture of the fire laddies, and she puts a sign on the bank which results in a run on that stable institution. Saved from reform school by the friendly intercession of a kind-hearted woman, she secures a position as a model with Miss Hortense Martinot, a modiste from New York. She makes a comedy model, indeed, alternately affronting Hortense's customers and falling over her train. She also engages in a flirtation with Dick, a city stranger, who has come to the village to sell fake jewelry. Going to the shop one night on a forgotten errand she discovers two "sleek" looking men tunneling from cellar to cellar on their way to the vaults of the bank. Hortense enters at this juncture in a most suspicious manner, and it dawns upon Minnie that she is intent upon making a get-away herself, and is in league with the robbers. So Minnie makes her employer a prisoner in the closet, and with the timely aid of Dick captures the men. Dick turns out to have been on the trail of the gang, while Minnie finds herself a heroine. And then Dick puts a ring with a real stone on her finger.

Miss Normand is one of the best comedienues on the screen, and there are few artists who can get a laugh with quicker readiness. In "Peck's Bad Girl" she has a vehicle uncommonly well-suited to her peculiar talents. Earle Foxe as Dick renders good support, and Corinne Barker as the wily Hortense could not have been better cast. All the village characters are admirably played, and the direction is perfect. The village built in the Goldwyn yard at Fort Lee, is a triumph.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, October 1918

"Back to the Woods" (Goldwyn)

They say a rolling stone gathers no moss, but the story of this latest picture of the Normand has rolled thru so many movies it must be hoary with age. Yet it has several clever twists and a corking fine leading-man in its favor. The leading-man being Herbert Rawlinson, and when you see him stride through the woods you will wonder that Mabel let him get away from her even for one moment. You see, Mabel found him in the woods, where she was masquerading as a school marm. Also he was masquerading as a hunter, while in reality he was an author seeking new material for his new novel. Mabel gave it to him a-plenty. The subtitles were altogether too long and numerous.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, October 1918

Who's Who in Starland

Mabel Normand -- Born in Boston, Mass. Dark brown eyes, fluffy black hair, weighs 112 lbs. Artist's model for C. Coles Phillips, Henry Hutt, Penrhyn Stanlaws. Began screen career with Vitagraph in Betty series with Flora Finch and John Bunny. Has played for Biograph, Keystone, Mabel Normand Feature Film Co., and Goldwyn. Most popular work with Fatty Arbuckle in "Fatty and Mabel," "Mabel's Busy Day," "Fatty and Mabel Adrift," "He Did and He Didn't," "The Bright Lights." Goldwyn pictures of note: "The Floor Below," "Joan of Plattsburg," "Dodging a Million," "The Venus Model."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, October 10, 1918

Mabel Normand Sells a Kiss

Mabel Normand had to forget her fear of Spanish influenza on Tuesday and kiss a man she never saw before in her life.¹⁶⁸ She didn't know whether he had been exposed to the now fashionable influenza, had just recovered from it, or whether he was sound, safe and fancy free. Being patriotic, Miss Normand forgot to ask any of these questions before she bestowed the kiss. She was selling Liberty Loan bonds in the Morning Telegraph booth, when a man in the crowd at Madison Square Garden called: "Give us a kiss for a bond, Mabel?"

"How large a bond," asked the wise Miss Mabel.

The laugh which greeted this question had the desired result, and the unknown man promptly replied a \$1000 bond. The bond was delivered and so was the kiss.

It was demonstrated that two stars can work better than one on Tuesday evening when Harold Lockwood and Mabel Normand boosted the sale close to the \$20,000 mark. This indefatigable team accomplished wonders. The women bought from Mr. Lockwood and the men flocked to the side of Miss Normand.

John C. Flinn was seen in the crowd and was invited to come in our booth. Did he leave without buying a bond? He did not -- not after Mabel Normand saw him. Neither did John Flinn, who has been one of the most patriotic workers for the Fourth Liberty Loan in the industry, try to escape the wiles of Miss Mabel. He willingly, nay, gladly, parted with his money and paid cash for one of the precious liberty-saving papers.

¹⁶⁸ The influenza epidemic of 1918-1919 mentioned here was very real, and for as many as half a million Americans it proved fatal. Harold Lockwood, a prominent and very popular film star of the time, died as a result of the illness not long after this piece appeared. Among its other effects was to keep many people home and out of movie houses, thus significantly crimping both movie profits and production.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, October 27, 1918

Miss Normand Sick

Mabel Normand has been fighting the "flu" all week. The devoted Mary Boyd, Miss Normand's maid, the minute Miss Normand's cold was discovered, put her to bed and has watched over her faithfully ever since. It is thought the heroine of the Goldwyn funmaking comedies has nothing worse than a bad cold in her head -- which, after all, is from an unpleasant stand-point, bad enough.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, November 1918

Mabel In A Hurry

by Frederick James Smith

This is the thrilling story of an interviewer's giddy life. "You talk to all the stars and *get paid for it*," people say, plaintively, to an interviewer. "How do you get away with it?" For their benefit, we faithfully relate our thrilling day with Mabel Normand.

We had particularly looked forward to our chat with Mabel Normand because that star had -- perhaps we're violating a confidence in telling this -- promised to "bat" our guide "over the bean" upon his next invasion of her immediate vicinity. Thus we gathered at the outset that Miss Normand was a young lady of tempestuous moods and moments.

With fond expectations of an exciting interview prelude, we reached Goldwyn studios "somewhere in Fort Lee" at the unearthly hour of 9:30 o'clock. That was the weird hour set for the opening interview of hostilities.

No, gentle reader, Mabel Normand had NOT yet arrived.

We were told to go the limit in amusing ourselves till the star arrived.

We watched the ukulele orchestra play while fifty extras ball-room danced in a scene for the forthcoming "Back to the Woods." The actual filming would not take place until Miss Normand arrived.

At 10 o'clock the ukuleles were still strumming idly...[Here Smith describes his looking in on Geraldine Farrar being film.]...

Fearing that we might be one of these Irritating Influences. We wandered back to the Normand stage. 11:30 -- still no Miss Normand. The ukuleles still played, the extras still danced, the electricians still tinkered with the lights

"Perhaps I can give you a few things of interest about Miss Normand," said our guide. "For one thing she never keeps an appointment. If she has an appointment for four, it usually occurs to her to begin dressing for it at 4:30."

"Is it possible?" we murmured. Then a commotion stirred the studio. Miss Normand in decollete', partially hidden by a dressing robe, dashed across the floor.

"Lo!" she exclaimed to us en passant.

"Lo! Rushed!...Late!...Back in a minute!"

Which you will admit is vivid stuff for an interview.

After a rehearsal in the ball-room set, she dashed back to us.

"You don't look a bit like an interviewer," she began. This is the usual way stars have of making you feel perfectly at home. "Just back from West Virginia. Amazing up there in the mountains. Service flags out in front of every one of those quaint cabins. We hired some of the women to work in our picture. They looked so poor that I sent to the nearest town and bought them some dresses...Do you know they're fearfully proud? Yes indeed. I had an awful time soothing their ruffled feelings and getting them to accept the clothes. I gave them some books, too. You know the stuff -- Laura Jean Libbey and that sort of book."

"Out of your own library," spoofed our guide. "I'll bet you depleted it terribly."

"Go on!" pouted Mabel. "You talked as if you had flat feet. I don't read Laura Jean Libbey and you know it!"

"No?" responded the guide, skeptically.

"No!" snapped Mabel. Then she told us of her new maid, a woman acquired from some millionaire's home. This staid maid hadn't yet adjusted herself to the mazes of studio life -- or the chameleon personality of Miss Normand.

"She told me that she had worked for several millionaires," Mabel explained, "but I told her I wouldn't hold that against her."

"Pictures are still in their infancy or something like that," began Miss Normand. She started talking of brother Claude Normand member of 106th Machine Gun Battalion, now in France. When the presence of the screen star leaked out, Claude was the most popular lad on board his transport.

Between scenes I picked up on other scraps of information. Mabel once lived for 30 days on ice-cream. I don't know why -- or what flavor -- but she did. I didn't have time to ask her. She thinks Charlie Chaplin the screen's greatest actor. She keeps scores of dime savings banks and is overjoyed when she fills them. Indeed, she chuckled at the mere thought of cramming one of them.

She likes flowers that are purple. She 'fessed that she signs her letters "Me," and when she likes a person she calls that lucky one "Old Peach." (We expect a "Me" letter after this interview appears, but we doubt that any "Old Peach" graces its lines.)

She has a terrific weakness for black lace stockings. She would rather do drama than comedy-drama, that is, with a smile now and then. She always carries a tiny ivory elephant for good luck.

Which completes our stock of information gained while Miss Normand dashed from studio floor to her mirror, close to which powder and eye-pencils rested on a chair.

It was 1:30. We had talked fully eight minutes in all the four and a half hours to the star. One's impressions aren't so very vivid after a piece-meal chat like this. Some one told us once that Miss Normand reminded them of a dancing mouse, whirling madly all the time but without purpose. She admitted to us that while she seemed gay most of the time, she really wasn't. "I get terribly blue and sad," she sighed. She does lead an exciting career.

"Life is such a rush," she said. We left her, while she dashed hurriedly thru a lunch brought her in a limousine. Looking back now, our clearest mental picture is of a young lady with wonderfully long lashes.

"Good-by," concluded Mabel. "Gimme my grape-fruit and a gas mask!"

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 2, 1918

Mabel Normand Will Be Heard

Mabel Normand is promised at Carnegie Hall this afternoon for a speech. She is to address 5,000 young women on United War Work and what in her opinion constitutes the best way to go about getting results for the various war necessities. The fact that is Normand has gone about quietly doing war work ever since she sent her brother to the front to fight makes everyone believe she will have something to say.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 3, 1918

Mabel Normand Makes A Speech

The principal attraction at the Victory Worker's rally at the Manhattan Opera House Saturday afternoon was Mabel Normand, who was present by special permission of Samuel Goldfish, president of the Goldwyn Corporation. Miss Normand's function at the rally was principally decorative and sympathetic. The speech she made was distinguished for its brevity. She followed John D. Rockefeller, Jr. on the program and told the workers what she heard about the splendid work and of the especially personal interest she took in it on account of her brother, who is in the trenches. What she said was as follows:

"There is nothing more out of my line than making a speech. I don't think I could ever have got up the courage to stand up here in this terrifying place and talk right out in meeting if this cause didn't mean so terribly much to me that I simply have to say what is next to my heart in this matter. You see, it has been brought home to me in the most intimate and personal way. I have a brother 'over there.' A brother who is more to me than anybody else in the world. Strangely enough -- for I am told it doesn't always happen in the best regulated families -- we are very fond of each other. He is the best brother I ever saw.

"Now every letter that I get from him is full of stories of the wonderful work being done 'over there.' by the Y. M. C. A., the Salvation Army and the allied organizations. -- I don't like to call them charities because the service they are doing is so much higher than what we usually mean by charity. My brother tells me, he doesn't know what on earth they would do if it weren't for all these organizations that are working heart and soul to bring a little comfort and happiness to the boys.

"I am not asking you to do anything I wouldn't do myself. I am in this drive with everything I've got of energy and money. Everyone of you here has a brother, a father, or a friend somewhere in France. It is for us he has gone to the front. It is for us that he is going through what can only be described as nothing less than hell. And the least we can do is to go to the front for them in this drive. To work like beavers to get this \$170,000,000 not only subscribed but over subscribed.

"This is our chance, the chance for all of us to show how much we love and thank the lads who are ever there for us, fighting for us, for your freedom and mine, to show how much we appreciate their love and sacrifice.

"And remember, first, last, and all the time, that every dollar raised is going to make somebody near and dear to us happy, to eat a little off his loneliness, his discomforts and hardships."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 3, 1918

A Gay Deceiver

Mabel Normand delights in playing jokes on those who understand her. Her mother, who lives on Staten Island, was the victim of the frolicsome Goldwyn star's latest prank. Miss Normand's limousine drove up not far from the Normand home the other day and out stepped a little old woman. In an unsteady voice she asked to see the lady of the house, and on being received by Mabel Normand's mother, quavered a request for old pies "for the war sufferers, madam." A moment of embarrassed silence followed, whereupon Mabel dashed off her wig and goggles and leaped into her mother's arms. Now she wants to play a character role in her next Goldwyn picture.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 10, 1918

When Mabel Made Her Speech

Louis Sherwin has a new grey hair or two added since last Saturday, when Mabel Normand made her speech at the Manhattan Opera House. In the first place, Mr. Sherwin had to use every power of persuasion to coax our little Mabel to make the speech. She insisted she was no speech maker, and couldn't face that crowd of people without suffering nervous indigestion, chills, fever and a few other ailments. Finally, with Miss Normand protesting every step of the way, Mr. Sherwin reached the opera house -- "They insisted we sit on the stage," said Mr. Sherwin. "I sat back of Mabel to block her getaway. Every time she moved I thought she was going to rush off the stage. I was so worn out by the time they called her back to speak I could hardly sit up.

"And would you believe it," said Louis Sherwin, "she made a good speech and won the hearts of all the people."

Mabel's version of the afternoon is rather different. She says Mr. Sherwin dragged her to the stage, and she wouldn't have been a bit afraid if he had let her wait quietly until her turn came from a back seat in the theatre.

"Why," said Mabel, "even John D. Rockefeller looked pityingly at me."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 13, 1918

Mabel Normand Goes West

Mabel Normand said au revoir to New York Monday night while the peace celebration was at its height. Even all this cheer in sending her westward didn't compensate for the fact she had to leave New York.

Up to the very last minute Miss Normand hoped she might be able to make pictures here, but with new studios just put in readiness by Goldwyn and plans all made for her next picture to be filmed here she had to join the Goldwyn throng and go to California.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Among the reasons for Goldwyn's abandoning his East coast production facilities, was the cost prohibitive electric bills for extensive interior lighting -- which were all the more expensive given the war.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 17, 1918

" Louella Parsons

Mabel Normand, her indispensable Mary and all her new clothes have moved to the Coast, as we stated last week. Our telephone has been kept busy asking for Miss Normand's address. She went without a word or a ring on the telephone to any of her friends and there is much desolation over her sudden departure. Her address, so far as we know, is Goldwyn Studios, Culver City, Cal.

* from *New York Tribune*, November 24, 1918

"Are We Downhearted?

No" Mabel's Last Word

By Harriette Underhill

Mabel Normand has gone to California. The worst thing about pictures is the way they have of removing people we like and taking them away from our devoted midst to the state of sunshine and flowers and California red ink and native sons and thing?

But Mabel has been at least half a Californian ever since she made her first success there. She goes back with all the weight of the added prestige she has gained in Goldwyn pictures in the East and even then she doesn't weigh very much. We mean this literally, of course, for we are very strong for Mabel, "if you know what we mean." Now, seeing Mabel other than on the screen is not so easy as it sounds, for Mabel is notoriously forgetful of appointments. But she professes to like us, and we believe her, for when she made an appointment, with us she not only kept it, but she arrived there first, so that we found her waiting for us. It was like "Little Mabel, little Mabel, with her face against the pane."

"In one way I feel rather like the farmer, you remember, who said: 'Goin' to town to get drunk, and, gosh! how I dread it.' I know I'll be tickled to death once I'm out there, but, gosh how I dread leaving. One of the funniest jokes I ever heard was the "traveling for pleasure" phrase. It is about as sensible as the idea of going to the dentist for pleasure. I hate traveling!" said Mabel emphatically.

"But cheerio! At any rate, there'll be no more of that ungodly trip over the Fort Lee ferry. There have been times when I could have killed the man who invented the Hudson River. Irving Berlin can murder all the buglers he wants, but I'm against the man who slams the gates of the ferry and says, "Next trip." "Everybody has been wonderfully kind back here. But I love the life in California. And it is easier to work seriously. And I have missed dreadfully some of my friends who never come East. You see, motion pictures bring both coasts and all coasts together. That's one of the reasons why it's a delight to be a cinemese.

"Of course I hate leaving mother. No, she isn't a stage 'mother.' She is the real thing in mothers, I can tell you. Every one always seems so surprised when I speak of mother. Don't I look as though I had a mother? She is the mother I told you of who had such long eyelashes. When I was little I used to call them thick mustaches. My week ends with her on Staten Island have been the only domestic life I've had for the last few months. Living at hotels doesn't spoil your taste for home life; it makes you all the keener for it. That is the biggest sacrifice I've made in working. I can't very well ask mother to give up her country place and get accustomed to city life, which she detests. And I never could have lived with her on Staten Island and got to the Goldwyn studios at Fort Lee in time to do any work. Neither can I ask her to come with me to California, because she has to look after my little sister.

That's one reason my friends mean so much to me, no matter where I am", for a moment the Normand eyes, with their absurdly long, lacy lashes, looked out into the throng of passers-by, and there was a far away look in them.

"Oh, but are we downhearted No!" she said with a sudden and characteristically Normandesque change of mood. "I should jolly well rather say not, as Charlie Chaplin used to say. The war is over, and in a short while, I hope, she'll have my brother back. I wish I could be here to meet him . . ."

We shifted the conversation to California. "It is a fact that you can work with ever so much more pep out there. For one thing, there aren't so many distractions. In fact, there isn't anything to do but make pictures, and when it gets too dark to work go to bed. That's life in California. "And then the sunshine helps the artist to say nothing of saving money for the producer. There'll be no such problems and troubles as we had last winter, when time after time we had to stop work because the juice was cut off. And we always had to stop at interesting points."

We asked her what new play she was going to work on first. "Sis Hopkins"! she exclaimed, laughing. "Won't that be grand? I'm sorry I never saw Rose Melville in the part. I hear she was wonderful. She must have been, to be able to go on playing it and making money out of it for so many years. "Broad comedy seems to be the only thing for me. The public pays the piper and has a right to call the tune.

Mr. Goldfish says he'll let me do nothing else in future. I suppose I'll have to spend the rest of my screen life rollicking as I did in "Peck's Bad Girl" and "A Perfect 36." "Sis Hopkins" is full of gorgeous chances. Do you know it? There's one advantage I shan't have to fuss much about dresses, and I can look as gloriously ugly as I darn please." No you can't, Mabel. You simply couldn't look ugly; no matter how hard you try, because we think you are a beauty, just as every one with good taste thinks.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, December 1918

"The Motion Picture Hall of Fame"

The Whirlwind Finish of the Greatest Motion Picture Contest Ever Conducted

Mary Pickford.....159,199

Marguerite Clark.....138,852

Douglas Fairbanks.....132,228

Harold Lockwood.....129,990

William S. Hart.....129,565

Wallace Reid.....119,466

Pearl White.....114,206

Anita Stewart.....102,876
 Theda Bara.....93,684
 Francis X. Bushman.....93,608
 Earle Williams.....93,426
 William Farnum.....93,318
 Mary Miles Minter.....93,090
 Clara Kimball Young.....88,576
 Norma Talmadge.....88,040
 Pauline Frederick.....87,231
 Charlie Chaplin.....86,192
 Vivian Martin.....85,648
 Billie Burke.....79,908
 Ethel Clayton.....78,919
 (others listed)
 Jack Pickford.....72,665

Henry B. Walthall.....70,887
 Mae Marsh.....63,290
 Bessie Love.....62,601
 Mae Murray.....62,244
 Sessue Hayakawa.....48,201
 Owen Moore.....48,054
 Blanche Sweet.....37,864
 Ruth Roland.....37,393
 Lillian Gish.....37,340
 Helen Holmes.....37,111

Dorothy Gish.....26,807
 Constance Talmadge.....19,634

 (listed 109th out of list of 422)

Mabel Normand.....19,605

(others listed)
 Roscoe Arbuckle.....19,107
 Alla Nazimova.....16,668
 Lionel Barrymore.....16,562
 Richard Barthelmess...16,533
 Edna Purviance.....16,440
 John Barrymore.....16,212
 Marion Davies.....16,194
 Florence Lawrence.....16,177
 Lon Chaney.....16,154
 Tom Mix.....16,113
 Chester Conklin.....16,024
 David W. Griffith.....16,021
 Max Linder.....16,020
 Ambrose Mack Swain...16,012
 Lila Lee.....5,010

* From *Photoplay*, December 1918

MABEL NORMAND

*I know a little lassie
 Who is breezy as in March;
 In any role she's classy,
 Her face is shy and arch.
 And dancing by the river
 Or where the cowslips grow,
 She sets each pulse a-quiver
 And every nerve aglow.*

*I know a maiden clever
 With springtime in her eyes,
 And 'round about her ever
 A gay March madness lies;
 And whatsoe'er the weather,
 As princess or colleen,
 She clasps her hands together
 And finds my heart between.*

-Lalia Mithell.

* from *Variety*, December 6, 1918

MICKEY

Mickey and Mabel Normand are one and the same. It would have been hard to find a more appropriate name for her, or to be correct, she could not have appeared in a title role in which she was better suited. If there ever was a hoyden in pictures, it is this young star. And yet, with all her tomboy pranks and cutting up, she is a wonderful little actress.

While it was not announced on the screen at the New York Theater, Mickey is a Max [sic] Sennett picture. This was as plain as day after the first reel, when the Sennett English bulldog made his appearance and later when half a dozen educated cats at various intervals made things lively for the characters.

One is slightly disappointed at first because the opening scenes are those of the usual cut and dry "western." But this illusion is dispelled as soon as Mabel Normand makes her appearance. Mickey's garments consist of an old pair of trousers, patched, heavy flannel undershirt and a discarded waistcoat, many sizes too large for her. She lives with her uncle and his squaw housekeeper. He is working a mine at the opening of the picture, getting very little pay dirt, and they are not over prosperous, but they are a happy trio.

Mickey's chief occupation is getting into trouble. She starts off by persuading the family mule to eat her uncle's razor strap. Throughout the picture she has many opportunities of displaying her wonderful horsemanship and most of it is bareback riding.

But Mickey's life in the "Wild and Woolly" west comes to an end when her uncle receives an invitation to send her east to some relations, who have a country home on Long Island. She goes there, but when these folks learn Mickey has no money they put her to work. As a domestic she is a rank failure and disrupts the whole household.

Throughout the picture she does a number of daring and intrepid "stunts." How it is that Miss Normand has escaped without any broken bones is a marvel.

There is a thrilling racetrack scene which was probably taken at the Empire City course and will be familiar to many New Yorkers. The other "locations" have been selected with care and the interior settings are up-to-date. Fine photography adds special interest to the picture. The cast supporting Miss Normand is splendid and the whole production breezes along, with action every minute.

"Mickey" is one of the best program features of its kind released in many months. It is one big laugh from start to finish.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, December 27, 1918

Miss Normand III¹⁷⁰

Mabel Normand sends a Christmas wire from Los Angeles, saying she has had a battle with pneumonia. Work on "Sis Hopkins" has been stopped pending the young woman's return to health. She is at the Alexandria, and we sort of thought we read between the lines of the telegram just a little note of homesickness.

* from *Moving Picture World*, December 28, 1918

They were working in the Hopkins kitchen, and Miss Normand was in one of her best "Sis" make-ups. I wished that Rose Melville could have seen her. I won't say that Mabel Normand is going to be a better Sis Hopkins than Rose Melville, but she is going to give a fine interpretation of the part; she is going to make Sis more human and less of a caricature than she was on the regular stage. Mabel understands Sis to be what she was -- not a caricature, but a real lovable being under grotesque make-up.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, December 28, 1918

" Grace Kingsley

Just as Mabel Normand, Goldwyn star, was happily settled in her Hollywood home, and was planning a nice house-warming party, along came the flu and not only threw cold water on all her nice little social plans, but stopped work on "Sis Hopkins." Miss Normand is reported to be seriously ill.

* from *Moving Picture World*, December 28, 1918 [advertisement]

A Film as "Live" as the Star

It's a Goldwyn Picture

Mabel Normand in

'A Perfect 36'

by Tex Charwaite

"They went miles to see her ride the waves."

A "Comedy" in the "Feature" Class

One prank a minute is Mabel Normand's record in her latest Goldwyn Picture, "A Perfect 36." The screen's most delightful comedienne as a boarding house slavey, a traveling saleswoman, a diving girl and an alleged jewel robber. Gives more of her joyous self than in any of her recent comedy successes. And her pranks never permit of a dull moment throughout its entire production.

At the **STRAND**

Wednesday & Thursday, Matinee & Night

Also: Mutual-Strand Comedy, MISS ELINORE FIELD in "They Did and They Didn't"; Official War Review;

Universal Current Events; Strand Orchestra.

Prices: 11-22c. Shows 2.30-7.30

* from *Moving Picture World*, December 28, 1918

" Robert C. McElravy

¹⁷⁰ It was sometime at this point that Julia Benson became Mabel's nurse and companion, remaining so right up until the time of Mabel's passing.

Mabel Normand is one of the younger screen artists who have succeeded in developing a following among picturegoers, and whose future work should be worth watching. She has come up splendidly since her early days in the one and two-reel comics, and in addition to her manifest physical charms and general daring she has many of the attributes of a first class comedienne. Her humor springs from a vivid and buoyant personality, and she never forces it to the point of exasperating her audiences, as female humorists are so often tempted to do. But we do not feel that she has yet brought her humor to its fullest development, unless it was in her highly successful offering "Mickey," which the writer has not seen, but which the public at large has taken to very kindly.

This current release, "A Perfect 36," is a very enjoyable subject and has some fine humorous moments. But for all that, and regardless of the fact that it is well above the average offering of its kind, it could undoubtedly have been stronger. The humor is effective and delicately handled, and the sub-titles are bright and laughable. The thing that is missing, it seems to the reviewer, is the touch of sympathy or pathos that is an almost inevitable concomitant of the best humor. Chaplin has this at times, almost to the point of tears, and we mention this because we think Mabel Normand could develop it if given a chance. There were opportunities for sympathetic touches in her friendship for Bessie, who was falsely suspected of stealing the jewels, but they were not utilized. We think that just as serious dramas demand occasional comedy relief to keep it human and appealing, so humor in more lengthy offerings demands, occasional moments of sincerity and pathos to get a balanced effort. We would like to see Mabel's director, Charles Giblyn, give her a try-out in something of a more mixed emotional appeal, but always of course with particular stress upon the humor.

* from *Moving Picture World*, December 28, 1918

An excellent example of the full use of co-operative publicity between the motion picture industry and kindred business enterprises is the campaign worked out by H. J. Shepard, of the W. H. Productions Company, and employed in the exploitation of "Mickey" starring Mabel Normand. And added point of particular interest to exhibitors is the fact that notwithstanding the completeness of the plan devised, it is claimed by the producers that it can be carried out at practically no expense to theatre managers although securing for them window displays and other valuable advertising privileges.

The extent to which music is employed in the exploitation is the feature of this campaign, which includes a "Mickey" song with words by Harry Williams and music by Neil Moret, published by Daniels and Wilson; three different gramophone records prepared by the Columbia Gramophone Company, one of the song, one a fox-trot arrangement by the Earle Fuller Jazz Band, and the other side is a medley taken from the orchestration prepared for this picture. In addition, the Okeh Record Company and the Vocalion Company both have prepared records of the song, and the Aeolian Company and Universal Music Roll Company have piano rolls of the song.

The method employed successfully by a number of prominent exhibitors to create advance interest in the production consists in working in conjunction with the Woolworth or Kresge five and ten cent store and Columbia gramophone dealers. A week or two before "Mickey" is to be shown, window displays of the song or records are prepared with announcement that the picture will be shown in a certain theatre. In addition, copies of the song are sold in the theatre lobby, or in some instances given away during matinees to attract patronage; and during this time as well as during the showing of the picture, phonographs obtained from the dealers play "Mickey" records in the lobbies. As an advance business-getter, the song is also sung by a soloist, while a slide with the chorus is thrown in, and some houses with drop curtains use them for displaying a 24-sheet, as shown in the accompanying illustration. Announcements are also thrown on the screen to the effect that the records and piano rolls can be secured from certain dealers.

At a recent meeting of representatives of the phonograph company held in Boston, which was also attended by officials of the five and ten cents stores, they expressed their enthusiasm over the campaign as outlined and promised their hearty co-operation.

The W. H. Productions Company announce that "Mickey" is meeting with great success all over the country, and in many instances is breaking box-office records as well as shattering precedents by the length of the run. Proctor's Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, a vaudeville house, is running this picture this week as an experiment, as they are said to have never used a feature picture before, and report big business, notwithstanding this is usually a bad week, the one before the holidays.

Among the theatres which have booked "Mickey" for seven days or longer, and are thereby said to have broken their precedents of not playing a feature over three days, are The Trent, in Trenton; Empire in New Brunswick; Lyceum and Plaza, in Bayonne; Montauk, in Passaic, N.J.; Mishlet Theatre, in Altoona.

The following recent sales of territory have been made on this production: To Sol. L. Lesser, for California and Arizona; M. Rosenberg, for Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana; Supreme Photoplay Productions, for Pennsylvania and Boston Photoplay Company, for New England.

In connection with the showing at Proctor's Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, the Columbia company carried a "Mickey" window display in their Fifth avenue store, which is said to be the first time, a photoplay has been so advertised on Fifth avenue.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, December 29, 1918

" Grace Kingsley

From Mabel Normand comes the glad news that so far as she is concerned the flu has flown, and that she expects to sit up today and take nourishment. Moreover, she thinks she'll be able again to don her Sis Hopkins makeup next week.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, December 31, 1918

" Grace Kingsley

The health of two of Goldwyn's most famous stars is improving. Mae Marsh, who has been ill for some time, has so far recovered that she is to commence work on a Goldwyn production on January 13. Her director will be

Roy Trimble, and the story is not yet ready for announcement. Mabel Normand, likewise expects to be able to don her "Sis Hopkins" make-up within a few days. She took a nice long motor trip yesterday.

1919

* from *the Tatler*, (no month or date given) 1919

A New National Character

For a Sweeping Country-wide Popularity Among Old and Young, Rich and Poor, in City and Country, Nothing in Years has Equaled "Mickey"

Here is Mickey! Mickey, the human, lovable, droll sometimes pathetic sometimes ludicrous but always wholesome figure who has become so famous. No creation in drama, fiction, screen or song has caught the public fancy and been taken to the public heart as Mickey has, and she will go down in popular history with "The Yellow Kid," Palmer Cox's "Brownies," "Peter Pan," "Little Nemo" and other striking and distinctive characters.

The first heard of Mickey was in the Mickey was in the moving pictures and by this time ten million people have seen this wonderful photoplay. The records of box office receipts at Washington prove this. Whatever you have seen, Mickey Being Shown Here To-day - in front of a theatre, you have seen lines of people, blocks long, waiting to get in. And why? Because no photoplay yet produced is so filled with adventure, thrills and human emotions as Mickey. One minute you feel a tear coming, but before it reaches your cheek you are holding your sides with laughter at some funny incident, or holding your breath with excitement at some hair-raising episode.

Five hundred thousand dollars is a lot of money, but that is just what was spent on this picture -- \$500,000 - before it was even shown to the exhibitor. But there was never the slightest doubt of its supreme success. From the time Mabel Normand read the scenario and started her triumphant creation of the role of Mickey until the W. H. Productions Company sent the films broadcast, it was a bull's-eye. It has rightly been called "a picture you will never forget."

Then, all unexpectedly, Mickey appeared in song-one of the prettiest, daintiest, hauntingest melodies in years. The picture inspired the song. One day Neil Moret, a composer, happened into the studio where the picture was being shown. He became fascinated by the charming personality of Mickey, and as the picture went on the music began working, and when it was over, Moret hurried to his rooms and wrote the theme that had already shaped itself in his mind. In two hours he was back at the studio and played the song for the members of the company. The author had no idea of what a hit it was to be. In fact, he had not written it with any idea of publishing it, but just to get it off his chest. Nevertheless, within a month a millions copies were sold in the West alone, and no end in sight to the demand. Waterson, Berlin & Snyder heard of the song and immediately bought it. The price they paid was well up in the five figures, but when the first order receiver from the dealers were totaled up they showed over 500,000 copies sold in the first four days.

To show how the song gets you Eddie Cantor, who is playing in the Follies in Chicago and who is the best judge of songs ever, heard it and put it on at the next show. It was a knockout. Ray Samuels, the clever vaudeville girl, and a great friend of Cantor's was appearing in Seattle. Eddie called her up and told her about the great song.

"How does it go?" asked Ray.

"Oh, Lord," said Eddie, thinking of the telephone toll, "get a copy of it."

"I can't wait," answered Ray, "you've got me so excited I must hear it now."

Eddie was game. He sang it through a couple of times and Ray said: "Great. I'll put it on to-night," and she did. She took the melody in her head to the orchestra, rehearsed it before the show, and was the hit that evening. Eddie was so excited about it all that he forgot to have the telephone charge reversed.

The Columbia Phonograph Company was quick to see the value of Mickey and immediately secured the rights of the song for their records.

Next to our President there is no better known character in the country today than Mickey.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, January 1919

Exhibitors' Verdict

What the Picture Theater Managers Say of the Plays and Players

Goldwyn

...Peck's Bad Girl, with Mabel Normand -- Poorest business in months. Had picture booked for three days. Ran it only two. Personal opinion, Mabel's best. Poor paper. -- Isis Theater, Cedar Rapids, Ia.

The Venus Model, with Mabel Normand -- Good picture. Fair story. Star not especially popular in dramas -- Homestake Theater, Lead, S.D.

Dodging a Million with Mabel Normand -- Our idea of a clever comedy drama for these strenuous days and Mabel can certainly put it over. -- Olympic and Majestic Theaters, Bellaire, O.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, January 1919

Mabel Normand brings with her a note of wistfulness to the Goldwyn Studio these days. She has not heard from her brother Claude, who went overseas in June. "Perhaps he has gone to Siberia. Perhaps he'll come back a Cossack and be cruel to me," mourns Mabel.

* from *New York Herald*, January 12, 1919

The Sun Shines Again

Once again the sun shines on Culver City, and all's well with the world or at least that part of it covered by the Goldwyn studio. For Mabel, the inimitable Normand, is back on the job, or, as we say in Robertchambers [sic], has resumed her invaluable artistic endeavors. In other words, she has recovered from the flu and is quite well and active once more, completing the screen version of "Sis Hopkins," which will be her next release.

For more than two weeks there was no balm in Gilead, and large sacks of gloom were in evidence around the Goldwyn plant. As everybody knows, it is a serious matter for a star to be taken ill when a picture is only half-made. Furthermore it is an anxious time for a producer, with some \$40,000 tied up in an uncompleted film.

Also, you can readily imagine that a studio in which Mabel Normand works becomes comparatively an excessively quiet, not to say dull place when she is about a couple of weeks. But now that she is again contributing to the celebrated gaiety of nations, the glooms have vanished. Incidentally, all her friends will be exceedingly glad to know that she has got over her illness, which for a whole while was very serious.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, January 12, 1919

" Grace Kingsley

When we told Mabel Normand that she looked as lovely as ever, even in the Sis Hopkins make-up, she responded, "Never mind the tip! The fact which principally matters is that I'm happy to be back here in California."

"Aren't you lonely for New York, then?"

"Lonesome!" exclaimed Mabel. "Yes, lonesome as a traffic cop at Seventh and Broadway on Saturday afternoon! Why, all my friends are out here, and they've been just too lovely to me for anything. Even when I had the 'flu' they kept me jolly with letters and telegrams and flowers and candy I couldn't eat. But I'll tell you a secret. I got a chance to read a lot of books I've been wanting to read for a long time. Just as Carlyle used to read yellow-back novels as a rest from serious labors, so the joyous comedienne as tragedy relief, so to speak, turns to highbrow literature. So I've been reading history and all kinds of stiff things, with H. G. Wells as the very lightest one of all!"

Of course it wouldn't be Mabel's picture, "Sis Hopkins," unless some funny little human thing happened during the making of it. This time it was a dog, which relieved the sad monotony of comedy making. A scene on which depended an important development of the story was one in which a dog sniffs at "Sis's" market basket and in doing so overturns the oil-can, which rolls into the spring, and--but there, I mustn't tell any more of the story. The point is, the dog must do all those things. But none of the dogs brought to the studio could be brought to enact the combination of incidents. Then Mabel made a suggestion.

"Why don't you go to the pound and get a poor, starved cur," was Miss Normand's happy suggestion. "It will eat anything." Sure enough, a poor, neglected, dirty fox terrier was chosen and brought from the pound.

"And it was right then," said Miss Normand, "he became a ham actor. He showed a ravenous appetite for ham. In his hunt for ham, the oil can was overturned, tumbled beautifully, and rolled right into the spring. And the play was saved."

Of course, Miss Normand insisted the forlorn canine be kept at the studios, and she calls him "Ham," and says hunger will make a good actor of anyone.

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, January 21, 1919

Chaplin's Bride In Snow Battle

How would you like to stage a snowballing party in Southern California? Ridiculous, you say.

You're all wrong, and if you don't believe it write to Mrs. Charlie Chaplin (Mildred Harris) and ask her about one she and Mabel Normand staged.

It was on the top of Mount Lowe, the famous peak of the Golden State, and the two screen queens and a party of friends had a royal time battling with each other. Mrs. Chaplin was captain of one of them and Mabel Normand led the other.

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, January 28, 1919

Just Like Her

Mabel Normand was responsible for one of the floats in Pasadena's annual Tournament of Roses on New Year's Day. Hearing that some of her juvenile admirers in California's Crown City had been saving their money all year to participate in the tournament, Miss Normand sent word that she would have an entire float decorated with violets for them. It was one of the most beautiful there.

* from *Photoplay*, February 1919

Mabel Normand passed through Chicago a few weeks ago, enroute to her first field of glory, California. I recalled two other transits of Chicago by la Normand. The first seems centuries ago, yet it is only a few years. Then the poor and unknown little Biograph girl, bubbling with enthusiasm, traveled unnoticed, unheard-of, to the stages on which she was to become the greatest of Keystone comedienne. With fame that she scarcely realized she came back -- presently. Reporters clustered about her almost-private car. Waxen from a recent illness, shrouded like a doll in a wonderful gown, her hands glittering with jewels, she saw them for a few moments, enroute to New York and a fabulous stellar salary. Now she's going to do "Sis Hopkins" on the Goldwyn-Triangle lot. It has been done, once by Rose Melville, but let us hope the revised version brings back to us the long-gone inimitable Normand of old.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 2, 1919

" Grace Kingsley

Mabel Normand is still somewhat weak from the severe attack of influenza which she suffered a few weeks ago. She is compelled occasionally to rest a day, and last Friday took a day off from labor.

* excerpt from *New York Morning Telegraph*, February 9, 1919

Mabel Normand's Alarming Symptoms

Mabel Normand, Goldwyn star, is still somewhat weak from her recent attack of influenza, and is compelled to take an occasional day's rest. During her illness Miss Normand became something of a reader...

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, February 11, 1919

Compromising With Mabel

Mabel Normand has been very ill, more seriously ill than any one outside of her close friends knew. She had double pneumonia, and for days her life hung by a thread, with everyone almost breathless in fear Mabel wouldn't get well. She is now convalescing rapidly, and everyone is spoiling her and letting her have pretty much her own way. Miss Normand's brother, Claude, is due from overseas this month, and Miss Normand at once decided she had come to New York and see him when he arrived.

Now, the Goldwyn Company didn't want to make the nearly well Mabel worse, nor did they feel they could afford to have her lose any more time at the studio. A consultation took place and it was finally decided that it would be cheaper to send Claude to California, so that's the way the whole thing rests. Claude goes to California as soon as he is mustered out.

* from the *Binhampton Press*, February 8, 1919

Mabel Normand's Art Pleases Elite Folk

GOLDWYN STAR THRILLS SEA CLIFF IN WATER SCENES FOR "A PERFECT 36"

Fashionable Sea Cliff, L.I. (Long Island) turned out to see Mabel Normand, famed as much for her diving and swimming as for her inventible comedy art, performing difficult water feats in her one piece bathing suit for screens in her latest Goldwyn Picture, "A Perfect 36" which comes to the Stone Opera House the first three days of next week.

Hundreds of New York and Long Island society folk were at the Sea Cliff pier when Miss Normand began her adventurous day in Long Island Sound. It opened with a clever diving exhibition, following which the comedienne started on a mile swim up the Bound toward Glen Cove, accompanied by a gasoline launch in which were the director, cameramen and members of her company.

The swim completed, Miss Normand was pulled into the boat for a rest, while the party returned to a spot about half way from the starting point. There in view of the throng on the beach, Miss Normand dived gracefully from the boat and emerged twenty seconds later thirty yards away, the launch then made its way back to the pier, around, which the second half of the Goldwyn star's swimming and diving program was held.

The most precarious feat accomplished by Miss Normand was a thirtyfoot dive from a diving board on the end of the pier with her hands bound and strapped to her sides. Smiling to those who stood about in awe the artiste climbed up to the edge of the board and without a moment's hesitation plunged into the water below. Prankful even under water, the nymph threw a scare into her distinguished audience and the director as well by taking her time about coming to the surface and then coming up where none expected her to -- a spot yards back of where she had made plunge. Vociferous applause greeted Miss Normand when she climbed up to the pier.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, February 23, 1919

Miss Normand's Memory

For all of Mabel Normand's capriciousness, she is a veritable Gibraltar of steadfastness when her heart is touched. She is apt to pass over lightly an enthusiastic review of her newest Goldwyn picture and treasure the remembrance of a personal kindness.

Such an incident is fresh in the minds of those who know her best. It happened the first day she rode out after her recent illness. Her big maroon automobile stopped at a market. Hurrying inside she recognized the pale face under the big hat, no one, that is, except a man behind one of the stalls. No sooner did he get a look than he began hastily slice tongue, salami, and other delicacies to proffer them on a sheet of wax paper when Miss Normand stopped. It was Bert -- but let her tell it in her own way.

"He hadn't seen me for two years, not since I signed my Goldwyn contract and went to New York. But he remembered me. Think of that! Always in the old days I used to go down to the market on Saturday afternoons to get plump chickens and things Bert saved for me, and always gave me what they call in New Orleans lagniappe -- slices of the most appetizing bolognas and things of that sort. He remembered how ravenously I used to gobble them and -- oh, he just remembered that and me! Wasn't it wonderful, after two years? I hope he hears how grateful I am because I'd much rather he knew than to read absurd stories about my being a cinema star. I told him, of course, but it would be much nicer to have him read it. So just let this be the interview you asked for, won't you?"

To date no one has ever refused Mabel Normand anything.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, March 1919

"Mickey"

(Goldwyn) [sic]

An entertaining comedy with Mabel Normand in the lead. Excellently played and photographed. Some of the western scenes were artistic in the extreme and the types and rural characters are excellent. There is something in this play to please everybody. While the story is not very strong, it is done so well and the acting is so fine that the story does not make much difference. It is remarked that this play was started two years ago and was widely advertised at that time. They took about 20,000 feet of film in the making and finally cut it down to 5,000 or 6,000 feet, and there are places where the story does not run quite as smoothly as it might. However, this is all lost in the wonderful atmosphere and cleverness of the character types. Miss Normand is seen in a new role. At first she is a simple rollicking unsophisticated country girl; second, she is dressed up in society clothes; third, she returns to her former life and fourth she marries her rich sweetheart. There are many fine human types in this play as well as several notable scenes. Miss Normand was once a famous diving girl away back in the old Biograph days, some six or seven years ago, and later in the Keystone comedies. In this play she again shows her shapely form and graceful diving stunts, but alas, at such a distance, that we are not sure that it is Mabel herself. This may be due to modesty on the part of the director or Miss Normand -- or it may be due to the fact that Miss Normand was apparently without bathing clothes $\frac{3}{4}$ being a poor miner's daughter living in a rough hut. That being the case, the public will probably excuse the director from keeping Miss Normand in the dim and distant background. In our judgment, this play is a winner.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, March 2, 1919

" Louella Parsons

[from an interview with Roscoe Arbuckle] ... And now about Fatty and Mabel. Fatty says he would love to have Mabel for his leading lady, and has always selected his heroine with an eye to the Normand type. And Mabel says she would like to have Fatty for her leading man, because they work well together, and there you are. Only Mabel is tied up with a Goldwyn contract and Fatty is signed with Paramount. So it looks as if the wish of the public to see Mabel Normand in Arbuckle comedies will not be realized for the present, at least.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, March 2, 1919

" Louella Parsons

While Mabel Normand was making "Sis Hopkins" at the Goldwyn studios in California, she noticed Madge Kennedy busily engaged with drawing board and pen and ink. The ebullient Mabel's curiosity was aroused, so while they were shifting the camera she went around and peeped over Miss Kennedy's shoulder and discovered that the object of all this industry was a pen and ink sketch of herself as Sis, pig-tails and all.

For before Miss Kennedy went on the stage she was an art student and had made quite considerable progress toward ambitions from which she was diverted by the enthusiasm of the late Harry Woodruff, who insisted that with grease paint rather than with oils or watercolors she would achieve her maximum of success. Recently she has been employing her spare moments in between scenes at the Goldwyn plant by making sketches of her colleagues.

Curiously enough, it was also the fair Mabel's ambition at one time to become a cartoonist. As everybody knows, she used to be a model for Charles Dana Gibson, Harrison Fisher, Howard Chandler Christy and several other artists before she ever went into the cinema. And all the while she was posing she was trying to learn to draw, with the encouragement and help of some of the men she was posing for. Since she became a star, however, she has drawn very little but salary checks.

But the sight of Madge Kennedy's industry has fired our Mabel with a recurrence of the old ambition. She immediately dispatched the amiable and ubiquitous Norbert Lusk to procure drawing materials -- scads and oodles of pens, pencils, bottles of india ink regardless -- and began to while away the intervals during which new sets are put up by making sketches.

Several magazines are bidding for the results of all this industry. So we shall soon see how Mabel Normand looks to Madge Kennedy and how Madge Kennedy looks to Sis Hopkins.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, March 2, 1919

" Grace Kingsley

Mabel Rescues Apron¹⁷¹

This is the tale of a goat who had his own goat got.

Having a member of the cast along on location who eats up the props is a thrilling and somewhat wearing experience, take it from Mabel Normand, Goldwyn comedienne.

While Miss Normand and her director, Christy Cabanne, enjoy kidding as much as anybody else, the experience she had the other day wasn't kidding, even if a goat which appears as an actor in the comedienne's current picture was in on it. To be precise, the company was working twenty miles away from the studio, when Mabel suddenly discovered her red apron was missing. Everybody was being blamed, from director down to property boy, when Mabel suddenly uttered a shriek. "Look! Look!" she cried, and the company looked. Then Mabel pounced on the goat and wrested shreds of the precious garment from the jaws of the animal. Miss Normand declares she pulled a big bunch of the apron right out of the goat's throat as it was going down. Be that as it may, she rescues enough red calico to be able to piece together an apron from the salvaged bits and some other material she happened to have with her.

As if the property boy's duties weren't difficult enough, Miss Normand rebuked her maid by transferring her bottle of tonic to the boy, with instructions that he call out the hours, like a ship's bell, so that she would know when to take the medicine made necessary by her recent attack of influenza.

* from *New York Times*, March 3, 1919

Mabel Normand is at the Strand as Sisseretta Hopkins, better known to the past generation as "Sis." Miss Normand dresses and acts Sis Hopkins convincingly. She does not become educated and wealthy in the last reel, and appears in an evening gown, and those to whom Rose Melville's famous character is familiar will enjoy Miss Normand's impersonation. She is well assisted by John Bowers as Ridy, Sam De Grasse as Vibert, and Thomas Jefferson as Paw. The oil can, which is one of the active members of the cast, as the story is told on the screen, has an opportunity to play its part, which it does well.

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, March 4, 1919

Mabel Normand Back From Trip to Balboa

Mabel Normand has returned from Balboa. She has been making some scenes for her new production at the beach resort. Her long anticipated "Mickey" is to be shown at the Kinema beginning Sunday.

* from *Variety*, March 7, 1919

SIS HOPKINS

A pleasing old-fashioned comedy-melodrama that has all the "good old" punches and is doubly interesting because Mabel Normand plays the title role. Miss Normand is the whole picture. Her antics as the grotesquely gotten up rube girl, who is sent to a "girl's cemetery" for "eddickashon," brought no end of laughs from the audience.

¹⁷¹ The incident related would have occurred during the filming of *The Pest*.

The picture for the greater part was inexpensive to produce as the scenes are mostly exteriors with the exception of about four interiors that were not costly. The supporting cast was fully adequate and the characters were held to the costuming of about a score of years ago to get comedy effects in dressing as well as in situations.

In addition to Miss Normand the comedy assets are the titles. They manage to convey untold comedy and served the purpose of amusing the strand audience on Sunday. Coupled with fine weather and this picture as an attraction, the Strand last Sunday had the biggest day in several weeks. There was more of a line out front than at any time since the playing of "Virtuous Wives" at the house.

The picture is an adaptation of the old Rose Melville play, directed by Clarence B. Badger with camera work by Percy Hilburn, and is released by Goldwyn.

In the cast supporting the star are John Bowers in the role of the juvenile rube lover, true to type, and giving a splendid performance. Thomas Jefferson as the father of "Sis" was most excellent, while Sam De Grasse is the heavy, who is trying to marry "Sis" because he believes that there is oil in Hopkins bottomlands, was all that could be desired.

In playing "Sis Hopkins" particular stress must be laid on the comedy angles of the picture and the fact that Miss Normand who starred in "Mickey" is seen in it. (Fred.)

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, March 9, 1919

Mabel Normand Gets a Thrill

Ferrying a temperamental raft across the squally waters of Balboa Bay on a windy day isn't all beer and skittles, says Mabel Normand, who ought to know, because that was the precise stunt she accomplished the other day, in pursuance of art as exemplified in her current picture.

In point of fact, Miss Normand got a ducking in the course of her performance of the feat. In the story, the heroine is supposed to row a ferry across a broad river. Balboa's back bay, a few miles from Port Angeles, offers an interesting background and so the scenes were laid there. Miss Normand made the start all right, on her frail craft, but a sudden wind springing up made the waters rough, and when several yards from the shore she was washed overboard. However, there were willing hands close by, and Miss Normand being herself a marvelous swimmer, she was quickly hauled aboard a rowboat, and, barring a bad cold, is none the worse for her experience.

"And they speak of this as comedy," ejaculated Mabel, as she shook the water out of her curls.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, March 16, 1919

" Grace Kingsley

Los Angeles -- Mabel Normand has completed "Fog's Ferry"¹⁷² at the Goldwyn studios, and on Monday will commence work on a new story. The name and nature of this story is not yet divulged, but it is understood that Victor Schersinger [sic] is to direct.

* from *Moving Picture World*, March 22, 1919

When the Grand Central from New York backed into the Toledo terminal on Sunday evening, March 9, a young army of picture fans, headed by H. C. ("Doc") Horater, managing director of Toledo's Alhambra Theatre and a number of newspaper reporters and cameramen, swept past the gatekeeper and formed a "reception committee" in front of Pullman Number Nine.

The "Sis Hopkins" who stumbled into Toledo was the same "Sis Hopkins" who stumbled along the main thoroughfares of New York during the week's engagement at Mabel Normand in "Sis Hopkins" at the Strand Theatre. The model engaged by Goldwyn to aid in the exploitation of the picture left New York at midnight Saturday for Toledo to help "Doc" Horater put over "Sis Hopkins" at the Alhambra, where it is now having its Toledo premiere.

Mr. Horater escorted the model from the station to his theatre. Goldwyn had wired Mr. Horater that the model would get off the train in her "Sis Hopkins" make-up and the Toledo newspapers published the telegram and ran columns of publicity. "Sis" arrived at the Alhambra Theatre in time for the start of the second show. In reel two of the picture, during the scenes where Mabel Normand springs through acrobatic stunts in a pumpkin grove, the screen was raised, the lights were flashed, the orchestra struck up "Turkey in the Straw" and out stumbled "Sis Hopkins," who, to the complete surprise and delight of the audience, entertained them in a five-minute skit of eccentric dances, clowning and imitations.

During the engagement of Mabel Normand in "Sis Hopkins" at the Alhambra, the model will promenade about the main business and residential thorough-fares, attired in that outlandish get-up.

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, March 27, 1919

Under the direction of Victor Schertzinger, Mabel Normand's new Goldwyn picture is well under way. It is a small town farcical attraction, a medium in which the new director excels, and an interesting cast has been assembled to do justice to the human types.

* from *Motion Picture World*, April 5, 1919

Her return to broad comedy made safe for all time by the success of "Sis Hopkins," Samuel Goldwyn is shortly to present Mabel Normand in a new comedy vehicle. It is "The Pest," a play that provides more action, more ridiculous situations and more opportunities for superior clowning and fun making than any other of her previous successes.

The picture was produced under the direction of W. Christy Cabanne, who makes his skill known in Goldwyn Pictures for the first time in this important assignment. In the production the comedienne is again seen, as a rural mischief maker, with, however, the addition of a logical reason for blossoming forth as a metropolitan belle.

¹⁷² i.e., *The Pest*

Much of the interest is found in the primitive country ferry which Puckers, the character played by Miss Normand, runs across a shallow river. Out of Pucker's mismanagement of the ferry develops a surprising plot, which involves, not only the girl, but every person in the town, with the big secret kept until the last scene of the play.

For portraying the amusing village types, Goldwyn surrounds Miss Normand with an interesting cast. Once more John Bowers is given the part to play a "rube" part. He is Mabel Normand's leading man, and divides the comic honors with the star. Alec B. Francis makes his first appearance with her since "The Venus Model," and Charles Gerard, Jack Curtis, James Bradbury, Leota Lorraine and Pearl Elmore complete the list of principals.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, April 6, 1919

Those California Parties

Our California correspondent partying with filmland sends us the following account of a dance party Marshall Neilan gave to the motion picture world in Los Angeles. In her own words and style of expressing herself she says:

"Some party! Marshall Neilan decided to have a party. He engaged the Gold Ballroom at the Alexandria; two jazz orchestras, some Chinese entertainers and about 500 invitations by wire, and was host Saturday night to one of the most notable gatherings in the history of motion pictures. Supper was served at midnight, after which a half a dozen Chinese minstrels appeared and announced that Geisha maids would serve chop suey in the Chinese room adjoining. Later dancing was resumed and the party broke up about 5 o'clock.

"Some of those present were: D. W. Griffith, Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Lasky, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Rowland, Samuel Goldwyn, Bert Lytell, May Allison, Pauline Frederick, Clara Kimball Young, Nazimova, Charles Bryant, Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell Karger, Herbert Blache, June Mathis, Kay Laurel, Edna Purviance, Blanche Sweet, Dorothy Gish, Bobby Harron, Richard Barthelmess, Lillian Gish, Mrs. Gish, Olive Thomas, Jack Pickford, Mrs. Charlotte Pickford, Clarine Seymour, Mildred Harris Chaplin, Mr. and Mrs. Mahlon Hamilton, Robert Ellis, Frances Marion, Clara Williams, Dustin Farnum, Winifred Kingston, Kathleen Clifford, Maurice Tourneur, James Kirkwood, Kathleen Williams, Constance Talmadge, Charles Eyton, Robert Vignola, Douglas Gerrard, Lew Cody, Mr. and Mrs. Al Cohn, Bessie Barriscale, Howard Hickman, Mr. and Mrs. Bryant Washburn, Tom Moore, Owen Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Kilgour, James Quirk, Harry Garson, Hugo Ballin, A. Lehr, Edwin Carewe, J. Fred Zimmerman, Ray Griffith, Eddie Cline, Marjorie Daw, Harry Hamm, Mercita Squire, Reginald Barker, F. W. Eldridge, Florence Lawrence, Howard Mortan, J. L. Frothingham, Nigel Barrie, Alice Lake, Mrs. and Mrs. John Ince, Rex Ingram, Joseph Ingel, Viola Dana, Virginia Norden, Anita Stewart, Mabel Normand, Clifford Grey and Mrs. Wilfred Buckland."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, April 20, 1919

Mabel Normand Ill Again

The cold germ seems to be flitting about the Mabel Normand domicile. Mabel was absent from the Goldwyn studio last week due to a severe cold, the third she has contracted since coming out here.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, April 24, 1919

"Louella Parsons

"Which would you rather do, play a village cut-up or a society girl?" Miss Normand was asked. "Race Tom Moore in my new Stutz," she answered.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, May 2, 1919

Mabel Blooms Again

With the roses of health once more blooming on her cheek, Mabel Normand has returned from her sojourn the mountains. She will continue to vacation for a week or two, however, at the end of which time she will commence work on a new Goldwyn picture.

Miss Normand was taken ill with influenza in the middle of the making of "Sis Hopkins." Being eager to finish the picture on schedule time, she returned to work sooner than she should have done for her health's sake, and has been a bit under the weather ever since. Now, however, she is again the old Mabel, and by the time she returns to Goldwyn studio she expects to be just pulling at the halter to get back to work.

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, May 6, 1919

Normand's New Role

In the forthcoming five-reeled subject, "When Doctors Disagree" (Goldwyn), Mabel Normand will be seen in a screen character entirely different from any she has hitherto portrayed. Generally Miss Normand's roles have been of the kittenish, hoydenish type; in the picture to be released May 25; it will be something more serious and sedate.

* from *Motion Picture World*, May 10, 1919

Crowded with the subtle comedy touches by Mabel Normand, "When Doctors Disagree," the Goldwyn comedienne's newest vehicle of mirth, bids fair to surpass in popularity her previous comedy successes.

"When Doctors Disagree" calls for animation and action, for ridiculous situations, for superior clowning and funmaking -- in fact, no other Mabel Normand production was so rich in opportunities for exploiting the many phases of the Goldwyn star's talents for broad comedy.

The comedy was written expressly for Miss Normand by Mrs. Anna F. Brand. Victor L. Schertzinger, director, is supervising the production.

Miss Normand has the role of Millie, the terror of her town. Right from the start Millie incurs the enmity of everyone in the staid old burg when she breaks up a gala May party.

Among the players in Miss Normand's support are Walter Hiers, George Nichols, Fritzie Ridgeway, William Buckley and Alec. B. Francis.

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, May 13, 1919

"The Pest"

Wire Reports -- East
Box-office value.....Good
Exhibitor comments: "Normand a hit in everything she appears in here." "Play is clever."

Wire Reports -- Central
Box-office value.....Good
Exhibitor Comments: "Story interesting and there is good comedy relief."

Wire Reports -- West
Box-office value.....Fair
Exhibitor comments: "Did fair business."

Nat'l Board of Review Report
Entertainment Value.....Good
Dramatic Interest.....Sustained
Technical Handling.....Well Done
Coherence.....Clear
Acting.....Good
Scenic Setting.....Good
Photography.....Fair
Quality as a Picture.....Above Average
What It Is
Romance of Little "Jigs" Ascher, who is a ferryman on a tiny rural river.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, May 14, 1919

Mabel Back on the Job

Mabel Normand decided that she was so healthy and full of pep that she didn't need a month's vacation after all. She is to return to work at the Goldwyn studio the first of next week in a new picture which will be under the direction of Victor Schertzinger.

* from *Moving Picture World*, June 19, 1919

Life as it is lived by the toilers below the street level in a modern palatial hotel is presented from the comedy angle through five reels of roaring laughter in Mabel Normand's latest Goldwyn production, "Upstairs."

As the little slavey in the sub-kitchen of a hotel, toiling in overalls and cap, yet always hoping to share in the luxurious life in the hotel parlours "Upstairs," Mabel Normand runs the gamut of emotions from pathos to tears, and when she finally finds a way to play the "lady" for only an hour her antics disclose hitherto unrevealed possibilities.

* from *Motion Picture World*, June 21, 1919

[This advertisement is presented as if its contents were written on a chalk board (by Sis Hopkins), and most of the letter "S" 's are spelled backwards. In the corner is a little picture of Mabel as Sis, with caption that reads, "That's me - Sis"]

Dere Frendz

Pa sez he jest knowed they couldent keep me out of the movin pichers, --
That folks like to laff, and cry a little, and then laff sum more -- so here goes, gosh ding it

Mabel Normand

As "Sis Hopkins"

And Charlie Chaplin, will make you laff too in his good old pichur "The Bank" a Chaplin Clazzic
Zignur Natiello leedin the Band, Fanklyn Wallace zingin, news pichur and so 4th.

The Circle, Shrine of the Silent Art

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, June 22, 1919

" Louella Parsons

Pity Mabel

Mabel Normand says she knows at last what "cruel and unusual punishment" is. She is undergoing it now in the making of her newest picture at the Goldwyn studio. It is little short of inhuman, she says, to have the very best jazz band every playing fox-trots and one-steps, and then have her stumbling around, pretending she cannot dance. Mabel Normand not dance! Why, she does it with such joy and ease that if a paralytic saw her he would throw away his crutches, sure that he, too, could dance. And then she has to be urged, almost forced, to dance in this picture, and while the perfectly good music goes on, she falls over her partner's feet and trips herself and bumps into other couples. "People may laugh when they see the picture," said Miss Normand, "but if they do it is just the old story of the clown who was funny, while his heart was breaking. My dancing temper is 'all got up' by the music and the good floor and the fine dancers -- and then, and then -- well, words fail me except these: If I get away with that scene, I'll know I'm some actor. Me not want to dance -- huh!"

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, June 24, 1919

"Mickey" Breaks Record

Mabel Normand now ranks as the best box office attraction ever seen in Cincinnati, as "Mickey" is entering upon its third week at the Grand Opera House. Records of the theater show that the attendance has eclipsed the mark set two years ago by "The Birth of a Nation." Attendance grew apace as the run was lengthened. The race track scene is of great interest, as the Latonia races are on across the river. Horse named "Mickey" got a big play every time he

was entered, but did not repay his backers for their faith. The song "Mickey" is sweeping Cincinnati, either being sung or whistled.

* from *Motion Picture*, July 1919

Of all the nutty news of the month, the prize goes to the announcement that Mabel Normand has installed a peanut roaster in her dressing room.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, July 6, 1919

" Margaret Ettinger

Mabel Normand is, oh! so happy. Her brother, Claude Normand, has just returned to New York after a year overseas.

* from *The Journal and Republican*, Lowville, N.Y., Thursday, July 24, 1919

Bijou Theatre

Mabel Normand, the girl with the expressive personality and acknowledged queen of the screen, in "Mickey," a Mack Sennett production with an all-star cast, will be the attraction at the Bijou Theatre, Lowville on Wednesday and Thursday, July 30 and 31, afternoon and evening. "Mickey" is full of fun and frolic. It sparkles with humor and bubbles with laughter, so that there is not a dull moment and when the entire production is over the play seems too short and you wish to see more of "Mickey." There is a deep, heartfelt appeal in the unaffected, wholesome love of this adorable little girl, "Mickey;" not much of a name, but she was as true as steel with the heart of a Juliet for her Romeo. No photoplay has yet been produced so filled with adventure and excitement. The climaxes fairly bring you to your feet out of sheer enthusiasm, and you forget all worries and troubles as she carries you through her wild and lovable career. "Mickey" is conceded to be the greatest motion picture ever screened, and whether you are young or old, you are sure to enjoy her.

* from *New York Telegraph*, July 27, 1919

" Margaret Ettinger

Los Angeles -- Scarcely a week passes without a notable gathering of the picture folk, socially. This week the assemblage was such a tremendous affair that it caused quite the biggest commotion of anything thus far given.

The occasion was the automobile races at Ascot Park, in which almost every star and director of the West Coast participated. Besides, there was a parade of the motion picture stars, so those who did not race appeared on the track at any rate, and gave an exhibition fashion parade, garbed in their latest Paris creations and riding in their newest Rolls-Pack-Arrow cars.

Among the entries in the fast races were: Marshall Neilan, Tom Mix, Carter DeHaven, Douglas MacLean, Donald Crisp, Henry King, Roscoe Arbuckle, Lew Cody, Al St. John, Ed Flannigan, Larry Semon, Earl Montgomery, and Joe Rock. The fashion parade included a stream of pictureland's best known actresses: Blanche Sweet, Anita Stewart, Peggy Hyland, Bessie Barriscale, Priscilla Dean, Enid Bennett, Pauline Frederick, Gertrude Selby, Virginia Lee Corbin, Juanita Hansen, Lila Lee and Dorothy de Vore.

The boxes were full of screen celebrities and their guests. Viola Dana, Geraldine Farrar, Shirley Mason, Wanda Hawley, May Allison, Bert Lytell, Tom Moore, Douglas Fairbanks and Mabel Normand were on hand to watch the fun.

A special feature of the day was the race between Cecil B. De Mill in an airplane against Thomas Ince's high powered car piloted by Eddie Hearne and which the latter won. The park was crowded, and best of all the proceeds of the big program races were added to the Actors' Fund and besides it was just another of those get-togethers, which are becoming so popular out here and which are doing much to put the picture people on a more firm and friendly basis.

* from *Moving Picture World*, August 9, 1919

At the present time, the roster of (Goldwyn) stars comprises Geraldine Farrar, Pauline Frederick, Mable [sic] Normand, Tom Moore, Madge Kennedy and Will Rogers.

* from *Moving Picture World*, August 9, 1919

" Giebler

Mabel's got a great little circus, with a 10-piece Afro-American orchestra -- does anybody know of any kind of band that can make sweeter music than a nigger band? I wot not -- and three elephants, one of whom -- I whope [sic] it's all right to refer to an elephant as whom -- was running up the cost of production by putting one of its little hoofs on a nice piece of redwood plank and breaking it into splinters.

Vic Schertzinger, who was directing the circus, said he's going to take Maud -- it was a lady elephant -- home with him to split kindling.

John Bowers was in the circus. John plays the part of a slicker, three walnut shell stuff, and Ogden Crane, who was wearing a suit of clothes that made loud and resonant announcement of his calling of circus manager.

Mabel who is playing the part of a waif whose parents, once performers, have died and left her with the circus, had a costume that can best be described as a "get up." Overalls, boots, a vest that was formerly worn by the fat man, a sleeveless shirt and a hole-y hat...

As I said before, Miss Normand is a regular circus. When she was not entertaining us with her talk and an exhibition of a temperamental star eating watermelon, she was persuading us to do stunts in the circus ring and get photographed at it.

There wasn't a dull moment at Mabel's circus set, and I had to leave sooner than I wanted to, but I had the pleasure of meeting Will Rogers immediately afterwards, which compensated somewhat.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, August 24, 1919

“ Louella Parsons

Mabel Normand Says --

Mabel Normand is running Will Rogers a close second out at the Goldwyn studio, as a sayer of clever sayings. The wonder is that they find time to do any work on the screen, but from time to time, news is sent out by the faithful press department of pictures, completed or pictures, so evidently they do other things besides try to out rival each other in wit. Mabel's latest sayings go as follows.

“I never knew a funny man who wasn't fat -- until I met Will Rogers.”

“Some folk think they're geniuses, when all they have is a bad temper and indigestion.”

“By the way, did you ever see a blonde old maid?”

“Some people say that ‘jazz’ isn't music. They're the kind that don't know how to dance.”

“No -- all directors aren't born with a megaphone to their lips. Some of them have lungs.”

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, August 28, 1919

“Upstairs”

Wire Reports -- East

Box Office Value.....Good

Exhibitor Comments: “Funniest ragtime romance in many moons.”

Wire Reports -- Central

Box Office Value.....Good

Exhibitor Comments: “Splendid attraction.”

Wire Reports -- South

Box Office Value.....Good

Exhibitor Comments: “Very funny.”

Nat'l Board of Review Report

Entertainment Value.....Good

Dramatic Interest.....Slight

Technical Handling.....Fair

Coherence of Narrative....Good

Acting.....Capable

Scenic Setting.....Good

Photography.....Good

Atmospheric Quality.....Fair

Quality as Picture.....Good

What It Is

A little nondescript in a “below stairs” job in a hotel catches a glimpse of high life as is lived upstairs in the hotel ballroom. A conniving society youth, a borrowed get-up, and a lot of nerve, she makes her society debut, and wins a big reward for apprehending a dangerous character.

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, August 28, 1919

At the Strand -- “Upstairs” -- Goldwyn -- Mabel Normand

Selections from Mascagni's opera “Cavalleria Rusticana” is the overture at the Strand this week. During the rendition the lights are dimmed down for Ave Maria. The back lights coming through the side windows and center gave a churchly effect. At the close of the overture the Strand Topical Review was shown opening with a march, called “World Peace.” General Pershing in command of American troops about to embark for home led off the news, followed by a novelty in the shape of the book containing the Peace Treaty with all the signatures in close-ups. A waltz by the orchestra ushered in scenes of motor transports in California being directed from the air, and then a fine scene of sailing yachts. The main feature, however, was the landing of the Prince of Wales in Canada, for which the orchestra played “Maple Leaf Forever.” A stirring shot of the big Pacific fleet arriving closed the Review. The usual Topics of the Day from the Literary Digest followed the close of the news, accompanied by a waltz.

The vocal numbers are excellent, Eldora Stanford sings the famous “Cradle Song,” arranged from the “Caprice Venoise” by Fritz Kreisler, adding as an encore the old favorite, “Annie Laurie.” The first was accompanied by the orchestra and the latter by the organ alone. Carlo Ferrettie, a new baritone with a fine voice, sang “Lolita” by Buzzi-Peccia. Both singers were received with generous applause.

The feature was occupied by Mabel Normand in “Upstairs,” a Goldwyn picture. In the cast are Edwin Stevens, Cullen Landis, Buddy Post, Beatrice Burnham and Kate Lester. The story concerns the adventures of a kitchen mechanic who aspires to life “upstairs” just for once. She is enabled to do this trick through a society man disguised as a bell-hop. A Little Mary Mixup gets into the plot about the second reel and furnishes an entertaining development in which the girl from the kitchen gets the hero, after a comedy fight in a bedroom. The orchestra played excerpts from “Roi Dit” as an introduction and a great deal of jazz for which the action calls. The organ took the picture at the telegram insert, the orchestra switching in again at title “The man you're with.” One or two agitatos of conventional type are used for the fight. The picture presents no difficulties for an average orchestra or organist.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, August 31, 1919

“ Louella Parsons

What It All Means!

Mabel Normand has been going in for psychology and psycho-analysis to say nothing of the dictionary, if one is to judge by an interview she is supposed to have just given out, in which she says of Victor Schertzinger, who directs her pictures: “He was a musician and composer before he reformed to make pictures and his cosmos is made up

of harmonious vibrations. I'll admit I'm temperamental at times, but I don't dare take liberties with Mr. Schertzing because his vibrations are inhibitory. Mine being antipodal, I'm kept in order all the time." Is Mabel, we wonder, thinking of giving up being the beloved tomboy of the screen to accept a chair of philosophy in some university? We ask you, Mabel, do explain the meaning of this interview.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, September, 1919

Mabel Normand belongs three paragraphs ahead, having furnished the inspiration for "Kentucky Dream." We might add that Miss Normand also furnished a striking photograph for the cover.¹⁷³

* from *Los Angeles Times*, September 12, 1919

Mabel's Musical Yearnings

Mabel Normand, the vivacious Goldwyn star, is so full of brightness, music and joy that she demands something to go with her temperament. Monday the Schertzing company went on location to Victorville, but no sooner had they traveled two hours than Miss Normand asked "Paw" Schertzing, her director, where the band was.

"Band?" queried he, "what band do you mean, Maw?"

"Why our own company band -- where is our music for this trip?"

"We did not order a band -- there is no dancing to be done."

"But I want a band," Miss Normand pouted prettily, "and you know it will be nice to have at the little hotel, too besides, we can always work better."

The finish showed Director Schertzing sending a telegram back to the studio, and, although he had rather a doubtful expression on his jovial face, he remarked, "Guess they'll send it, for she has always had one with her -- and, goodness knows, she needs something to go with her joyful spirit."

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, October 16, 1919

Excellent Comedy Business in Circus Atmosphere Sure-Fire Laughing Success

Mabel Normand in "JINX"

Director.....Victor Schertzing

Author.....Shannon Fife

Scenario by.....Gerald C. Duffy

As A Whole.....Exceptionally human and smooth running comedy that hits on high and registers laughs with very pleasing regularity.

Story.....Just enough to tie together funny bits of business.

Direction.....Gave great circus atmosphere with ideal conditions for star to register in, and kept comedy tempo just right to keep it from lagging at any time.

Photography.....Generally excellent; many splendid close-ups of star.

Lightings.....Some beautiful exterior shots, with lighting on star excellent.

Camera Work.....Very good throughout.

Star.....Registered one of the greatest characterizations of her career.

Support.....Good types, with kids and animals fitting in naturally and registering much good comedy.

Exteriors.....Very good.

Interiors.....Quite satisfactory.

Detail.....Very good.

Character Of Story.....Wholesome and happy; will delight kids and grown-ups.

Length Of Production.....4,069 feet

They certainly have rung the bell with this latest Mabel Normand offering. The laughs come with a regularity that keeps you happy, and all of the comedy business blends naturally into the story, which provides just enough action to tie the incidents together and keep it running smoothly.

Can you imagine opening up on Mabel in a funny roustabout's costume, seated nonchalantly under a big elephant manicuring his nails? That first introduction is going to get them, and from that time on they will all be with Mabel, because comedy continues fast and furious without ever running too far afield to register effectively.

Mabel is the Jonah of the circus, and when the star dancer quits Mabel undertakes to do the famous "Rainbow" dance in which she tries to manipulate yards upon yards of gauze at the end of two long sticks -- you remember, the old serpentine dance stuff.

The fun they get out of Mabel's efforts with this dance, which precipitates a fight between the "wild" man, who is Mabel's friend, and the manager, with the panic of the crowd when the "wild" man escapes, is about as sure-fire as anything ever screened.

Mabel, after her escape from the circus, lands at a farm house where a kindly old lady is caring for seven orphans of various ages, and after her human introduction (the kids thinking first she is a fairy) we find her staging a home circus for the youngsters. This provides many more laughs. Then we have a touch of melodrama when the drunken manager tries to get even with Mabel and almost wrecks the house, with the "wild" man again whipping him in a corking good fight, which melodrama is carried just far enough to not allow it to offset the comedy spirit which pervades the entire film.

¹⁷³ In addition to "Kentucky Dream," and, of course, Harry Williams' "Mickey," other songs dedicated to or inspired by Mabel which appeared during her lifetime were: "The Sister of Rosie O'Grady" (1918, put out by Goldwyn), "Lullaby Time" (1919, Goldwyn), "Sunshine Sis" (1919, Goldwyn), "Please Come Back to Me" (1919, Goldwyn), "Why Didn't You Leave Me Years Ago? -- Instead of Leaving Me Now" (1920, Goldwyn), "Molly O (I Love You)" (1921, Sennett), "Suzanna Waltz Song" (1922, Sennett), and "Raggedy Rose" (1926, Hal Roach.) All of these survive as sheet music with Mabel displayed on the cover. See: <https://archive.org/details/MabelNormandSheetMusic>

Of course, we finish with the “wild” man, who was also the ticket seller of the circus, and Mabel happy on the farm.

The first reel gets away to a wonderful start, not only because of the excellent handling of the action but because of some very fine titles. There are many other good titles running through the film, some of them being classics.

I believe this is one of the most effective things Miss Normand has ever done, because she gets a chance to put over human little bits of business that will register with anyone, and she swings from the uproarious comedy to the human little character touch so naturally that we don’t have any offensively false notes in the entire offering.

If your crowd don’t get a good time out of the circus stuff in this, and the fun Miss Normand has with her first meal and the home circus on the farm, then there is something wrong with your gang, because this production should surely register as a real comedy in any community, and I don’t have to tell you how few real comedies are made.

The general photographic value was excellent, and I want to particularly recommend the handling of Miss Normand’s close-ups, because those big beautiful eyes will certainly win anyone as photographed in this.

Once or twice they were dangerously near letting the melodrama, needed to tie the story together, take up too much footage, but it was shut off just in time, and it provides the necessary contrast and action thrill to round the subject out very satisfactorily.

The very pleasing cast included: Cullen Landis, Frances Carpenter, Ogden Crane, Gertrude Claire and Clarence Arper.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, October 22, 1919

Mabel Normand Flits

Mabel Normand flitted to New York last Sunday, accompanied by a great basket of fruit bestowed on her by a handsome young man, an admirer of hers named Clark Irvine,¹⁷⁴ also by an equally handsome traveling case, the gift of her chum, Edna Purviance. Miss Normand is going to take a vacation in New York with her mother for a whole month, and declares she isn’t going near a studio the whole time, but that she does mean to feast her soul on the best new plays on Broadway.

* from *New York Herald*, November 9, 1919

Mabel Normand Renews Contract

Mabel Normand has set all the rumors as to her future at rest by signing a long term contract with the Goldwyn Company. Of course Miss Normand, who is in town for a vacation, has a lot of things to do -- such as seeing her old friends and buying clothes -- besides think of business. But the film companies just wouldn’t let her enjoy herself until she had decided the question of the one for whom she would make pictures. So she signed the contract with Goldwyn, and then, as an anti-climax to all the excitement, announced she had never had any intention of going to any other company.

Mabel Normand has been playing her pranks on screen for the Goldwyn Company almost since its organization. There were only three or four pictures released before her first one was distributed. She has as much humor and “pep” added to a real talent for acting and unusual beauty that it is little wonder her pictures have proved so successful.

“Pinto,” the picture which Miss Normand finished just before she came East for her vacation, she declares is the best picture she has ever done. It was written for her by Victor Schertzinger, who directs all her pictures.

“Perhaps one reason I like it best,” said Miss Normand, “is that it is the first time I have played a Western girl. I’ve done all kinds of things in pictures, but this is the first time I’ve had the part of a Girl of the Golden West. And I love it! There are some exciting scenes in it on horseback, and I’m just sure that audiences will love them because I had so much enjoyment making them.

“How long am I to be here? Until December 3. It is great fun to be back and see everybody I know and go to plays instead of making them. But when I get back to California, I’ll say it is good to be back there. And I’ll mean it, too. I’m always so eager to know all about my next picture. The continuity of the one I’m to go to work on when I return is being written now. But for the present, I’m really playing and playing in pictures.”

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 13, 1919

Mabel Normand Guest of Honor

A glance at the luncheon table at the Ritz yesterday would seem to indicate that not a motion picture editor in New York was absent. The occasion was a luncheon given to Mabel Normand by the Goldwyn Company, and the number of men present at the party would also seem to show that Miss Normand is very popular, for men, who seldom attend these star parties, were there yesterday and no one left until the star herself had quit the scene to keep a dinner engagement.

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, November 13, 1919

And Mabel Normand goes merrily on. Once she ached to play straight drummer, but nothing doing. Too clever in the funny parts, “Mickey” has been played and even sung, and could be revived any number of times. Ask any fan to name the best comedy of the year and the answer will be in six letters, “M-I-C-K-E-Y.” “The Jinx” carries some comedy catchy ads. Notice the seven black (I almost said green) cats on a green background? Speaks well for the successor of “Mickey,” and those on the inside say it’s bigger and better.

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, November 18, 1919

Interview In Jazz With ‘Fun Girl’ Of Films

By Ray W. Frohman

¹⁷⁴ Clark Irvine had recently replaced Norbert Lusk as head of Goldwyn publicity on the East Coast.

ORIGINAL STUNTS -- hilarious, knockabout, tomboyish.

And sensational thrills, both athletic and melodramatic.

The combination, with an hors d'oeuvre of "emoting," is comedy drama; and the leading exponent of her particular -- and delicious -- brand of it is MABEL NORMAND, the cyclonic funmaker of the screen.

HOW DID SHE "GET THAT WAY?"

Obviously the question called for a personal investigation, which I accordingly made at Culver City.

Ever since that convulsing combination of midsummer madness and thrills yclept "Mickey" flashed upon the screen, the world of picture fans -- and that means the world -- has held its splitting sides in amused amazement, and amazed amusement, at Mabel Normand.

"What sort of creature IS this merry madcap?" is what everybody wants to know.

We have all seen her intersperse her funmaking with such thrilling episodes as handing by her toes from a springboard -- or by her fingernails to the edge of a house until her rescuer finishes a fist fight; or slugging a jockey and leaping onto his racing horse -- or even staging a finish fight with a desperate "villain" herself.

And no one who saw "Mickey" "cutting up" in a gown "swiped" from the haughty rich girl, or diving in the distance wearing nothing in particular and wearing it well -- or saw that frowzy hoyden, "The Pest," knocking gentlefolks galley-west by running her ferryboat "kerplunk" into the bank, or stuffing sandwiches by the dozen down her neck when at large in a home of wealth -- no one who received such a treat will soon forget Mabel's frolics.

They are stored in memory's treasure house of "working" delights.

An inspection of Mabel at large on the Goldwyn "lot" convinces me that she got her start BECAUSE SHE IS A "NATURAL BORN" "SCREAM" -- and that the reason she was starred is because she's THE BIGGEST "SCREAM" IN THE WORLD!

As studio "cut-ups" go, she is the "cut-uppiest!"

We shall elucidate, enlarge, embellish.

It is a comparatively simple matter to interview "Mickey" -- for Mabel will always be "Mickey" to me.

All you have to do is wait a few day or week or so until the obliging publicity man, the production manager, the transportation potentate and a couple of others find out when the spirit of devilment will be confined to the studio.

For "on the set," "on location," or off duty, "Mickey" is perpetual motion itself! A hare is a tortoise compared to her when her natural animal spirits are on the job.

Then, after making an appointment, you have only to wait until she devours a few chunks of steak at lunch -- with onions attached, as she is unconscious of the prying eyes of the public press -- and changes her costume a few times.

Surely you won't mind waiting an hour or so while "Mickey" straddles a tapering, vermilion exchange automobile for a dozen or so "stills"; pose it, hold it up, with her six-shooter in her RIGHT hand -- for she is great on being logical -- and christens it, with occasional hoarse roars of discomfort.

There is now nothing between you and the secrets of "Mickey's" heart but the "shooting" of a few scenes in her in-the-making picture, written by her director, Victor L. Schertzinger.

About sundown, when her work is over, "Mickey" will turn in your direction and, if you'll take a solemn oath that you're not going to write "one of those stories" about what brand of chocolate the actress eats, and whether or not she is addicted to the perfume bath habit, Mabel will sit on the steps of the "set" and TALK.

But she'll say little of HERSELF.

And you must hurry; and as there is FUN all over her profile and in every line of her fact, you can hardly pin her down to "real serious" facts, such as her birthplace or schooling.

Mabel will introduce you to Samuel Goldwyn, who happens to gumshoe by with his genial smile; her horizontal eyebrows will lift as she croaks a "Hello, Jack!" for the male Pickford, and give him a manly handshake; she will tell you that "Mr. Schertzinger is a wonderful director -- he's creative," but the genuine, "on-the-level" "dope" about Mabel herself you must drag out by force.

"I DIDN'T HAVE BUT ONE BIT OF STAGE EXPERIENCE before I went into pictures," opens this monologue-under-duress of the Peck's Bad Boy of the screen.

"Hurry up, will you?" she ordered after she had said THIRTEEN WORDS!

Honestly, it was cruel! I knew "Mickey" would rather be clinging to a chandelier, or treading the wheel in a squirrel cage, or something!...

[For the middle section of this article see "Biographies" section of this *Source Book*, as found in the appendix.]

...I didn't have the heart to keep "Mickey's" monologue from you any longer, or I'd have told you before how she was dressed when she "blew into" that colorful and animated cafeteria at lunch time to demonstrate that even a frolicsome comedienne -- with -- emotional -- moments must eat.

If you remember that "Cheyenne" song of years ago, she was "Shy Anne, shy Anne, hop on my pony."

Her black curls were roofed over with a great big cowboy hat. Her jacket and divided skirt, which hung to her knees as a concession to public sentiment, were of buckskin, with buckskin fringe. Her forearms were bare and she wore an Indian bracelet of silver with turquoise in the center. Beneath her plump chin was a thin silk waist of light tan.

She was a snappy little cowgirl, and looked 17 or so.

And don't miss the white silk stockings on her husky calves, and the black high-heeled shoes that of course all cowgirls wear!

Opposite her was her likable, curly-haired leading man, aged 24 -- Cullen Landis, the wild man in "The Jinx." Pauline Frederick was nearby. Farrar and her "Lou" had just gone out.

In trooped a beautiful bare-legged, flaxen-haired Saxon goddess, of the Sennett bathing girl or Ziegfeld Follies type, wearing a red sash of Chinese silk -- nothing much in front and a mighty sight less than that behind -- and a daringly brief ballet skirt of white satin frills. Myrtle Rose -- an extra who's going to be something more, unless beauty has lost its market value for the films.

Then they came by the scores -- 57 varieties of "extras," make and female, in every stage of fancy dress and undress -- monks, outlaws, Circassian sirens, bellboys, everything! They had been making frantic efforts at 57 varieties of "shimmying" and merrymaking in a wild fancy dress ball-cabaret scene in one of Tom Moore's pictures.

But amid this tumult, this riot of color, and proximity of other beauties, snappy little "Mickey" -- looking her cutest when just about to smile -- held her own on looks and interest!

Later, with the assistance of "Pa" Schertzinger's muscle and a couple of impromptu grunts from "Ma," the acrobatic and irrepressible Mabel was incased in a huge, broad leather belt over the overalls she had donned, and a right Bill Hartish pair of "chaps." High tan boots some slave had hoisted on her, and her light tan shirt was open at the neck.

That, mes amis, was Mabel Normand, the ludicrous stuntster of film comedy-drama, whose highly absurd situations, and the sport she get out of them, make her such a popular royal jester to His Majesty, the Public!

Grudgingly, she admitted something to this effect regarding her novel and "impossible" funny stunts:

"I think up SOME of them: but Mr. Schertzinger and I put our heads together and work out most of them. None are given to us in the scenario manuscript, you know."

And then Mabel, wandering o'er the lea -- or lawn -- at the close of work, hand in hand with "Pa" and caroling, "We're going on a vacation!" indulged in a couple of Parthian shots:

"No, I've never been married."

"How old am I? Aw, I'm not a hundred and five!"

* from *Exhibitors Trade Review*, November 22, 1919

Goldwyn Welcomes Mabel Normand To New York; Luncheon At Ritz-Carlton

Like a ray of California sunshine, Mabel Normand flitted into the gloom of one of New York's rainy autumn days and smiled and chatted with the score or more representatives of the press and the Goldwyn office force at an informal luncheon given in her home at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Wednesday, November 19th.

The little Goldwyn star seemed glad to be in New York, although she confessed that she loved California, and hoped to spend her Christmas holidays there this season, having been deprived of any celebration last year by the attack of influenza which kept her in bed all through the festive Yuletide. She certainly didn't look as if she had ever had a sick day in her life, and we want top record right here that Mabel is ever so much prettier off the screen than she is on, and that, and that is going some as all lovers of her mischievous, laughter loving face will agree. One misses her color which is like a California poppy in its fresh radiance, and the sparkle of her dark eyes, and the up-tilt to the corners of her mouth, which surely was never made for anything but smiles. She is a most natural, unassuming, democratic little star, which is a welcome relief after the "up-stage" manners adopted by some of our lesser lights of the screen. She just chatted away like any normal, healthy minded girl, and told jokes on herself and asked all sorts of questions about other stars and screen people like a regular movie-fan.

She says Victor Schertzinger is the finest director ever, and she has to be back in Los Angeles by December 3, as she must start a picture then, and she doesn't want any other star to get Victor first -- which should make that genial gentleman feel quite puffed up.

Mr. Ralph Block, director of publicity for the Goldwyn company, was a sort of master of ceremonies, although there weren't any to speak of, everything being most informal. The central dining room on the main floor was the scene of the luncheon, with a table decorated with pink roses and chrysanthemums and autumn leaves.

What did she wear? Oh, dear me yes, we were almost forgetting that quite important question girls. Well, she had on a simple little blue serge dress trimmed in silver, and a soft blue and silver velvet hat, and a single string of pearls, and one lovely pearl ring, and a wonderful mink coat, and she looked like any well-dressed young society girl, with not the least attempt at anything theatrical, for while we again thanked her good sense and her good taste.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 29, 1919

Mabel Normand Delights Children

Mabel Normand made the crippled children of the Seaside Home at Avern, L.I., very happy yesterday by appearing at a special performance at the Strand Theatre. These little folks had previously seen her in "Mickey" and when the Goldwyn star appeared on the stage there was wild excitement among the children.

In addition to Miss Normand, there were musical numbers, the Strand Topical Review and a comedy picturization of "When A Fellow Needs A Friend," presented through the courtesy of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, December 7, 1919

Mabel Normand to Remain

Mabel Normand's usual insouciant manner changed to one of exceeding anxiety when she thought she was to be shipped bag and baggage to the Coast before Christmas. But her anxiety wasn't a patch on the real sorrow of her millions of friends. If Samuel Goldwyn had decided the young lady must make her next picture at Culver City he would have been visited in all possibility by a delegation of Normand friends who would have endeavored to make him change his mind when the happiness of one of his stars is at stake, and beside, who could refuse to let Mabel have her own way when she really wants a thing.

So Mabel is to remain in the East to make "Maggie," her next picture. Work will be started on it as soon as the contingent from California arrives. Victor L. Schertzinger, who manages to understand the Mabel type of pictures better than any director she has had in some time, is coming on to direct her. He will be accompanied by his wife and Cullen Landis, the latter being cast as Miss Normand's leading man. "Maggie" is by Edward Peple.

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, December 18, 1919

"Maggie" for Mabel Normand

Mabel Normand, Goldwyn comedienne, will make her next picture in New York under the direction of Victor L. Schertzinger, who directed "Jinx," "Pinto," and other productions. The vehicle selected is "Maggie," a stage play by Edward Peple, author of "A Pair of Sixes."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, December 18, 1919

Mabel Tells Her Troubles

It's been a case of "off again, on again, gone again, Finnegan" with Mabel Normand for the last six weeks. After much coaxing, she finally received the promise of the Goldwyn company to let her work in the East. She was as happy as a lark and everything seemed to be moving along beautifully. Victor Schertzinger and his staff came on to direct the picture, when the government stepped in and put a ban on coal. The company turned around and went right back again, leaving Mabel to follow on January. Then, alas and alack, the very day the Goldwyn company left town, the ban was lifted; but too late to permit Miss Normand to remain in the East. She leaves New York after the holidays.

* from *Variety*, December 19, 1919

THE JINX

Manicuring an elephant's toe-nails, we first see Mabel Normand as "Jinx," and then doing all odd jobs around the circus lot to square herself with the mob, only to be looked down upon by all including the "boss" as "patsy" of the troupe. And she is some "patsy," too. For no matter how Miss Normand tries to do things they are all wrong with everyone but the "Wild-Man." Even "Rory Bory Alice," whom she tries to help out of a predicament turns on her.

But the "Jinx" is persistent in her determination to make good and when "Rory Bory" blows the outfit a few minutes before she is to do her serpentine dance, the "Jinx," without consulting anyone, dons her resplendent regalia and attempts to interpret her fantasy. She becomes twisted up in the yards and yards of silk, balls up the dance, riles the boss, who attempts to get at her to throttle her, causes the wild-man to break loose from his cage and thrash the boss as well as break up the show, and drive all customers off the lot. Seeing what havoc she has wrought, she flees and takes refuge in a stall of a stable belonging to an orphanage run by "Aunt Tina." She is discovered by one of the kiddies who reports to the rest of the children a fairy has been discovered. She is taken in as one of the household, but soon enough driven out because of the circus. The "Boss," his sweetheart "Alice," meets the "Jinx" and attempts to beat out of her the information where his girl has gone. He tries to set the orphanage afire, when "Slicker" Evans, the "Wild-man," comes along and trounces him and wins the heart of "Jinx," with whom he has been in love.

Miss Normand shows her superior ability as a comedienne and uses her utmost talents in making situations humorous and getting laughs aplenty through them. She shows her versatility when giving a circus for the kiddies, doing "Wire-walker," "Ballet," "Dancer," "Acrobat" and "Animal Trainer."

The picture is an unusually pleasing one, does not lag, is consistent and full of punch. It is not an expensive production.

For this time of the year, it is an ideal release, interesting young and old and should outrival her previous picture "Freckles."

One thing very noticeable was the closeups. Miss Normand should not have tried to stand the test in kid character.

Cullen Landis gave a remarkable performance as the "Wild-man" and also displays his athletic prowess as a pugilist. Florence Carpenter in her "fly" part, left little for the imagination. Ogden Crane seemed to over-play the circus owner, especially in his fits of infatuation. Gertrude Claire and Clarence Arper gave the human interest touch as the orphanage keeper and the sheriff.

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, December 25, 1919

"The Jinx"

The first number of the Capitol's current program is a Color-Land Review from the Prizma stock. This begins with scenes during stormy weather on the Pacific. Another subject is a line-up of Christmas toys, while the organ played "Adeste Fidelis." The Capitol Girl appeared in several fetching costumes and smiled sweetly at the audience. Organist Berenstein played Kreisler's "Schon Rosmarin" for this section, ending with MacDowell's "Old Love Story." For this particular matinee performance the pictures were sandwiched in between the Wayburn Revue members, which made the program a varied one.

Hy Mayer's "Travelaugh" gives some ideas of life on the east side of New York. These pictures, by the way, are a distinct novelty, being a union between the cartoon stunt and actual photographs with very excellent fade-ins. For short subject matter this series can be booked as a sure success. They are all interesting. The organ used old songs of New York, "The Bowery," etc. For Little Italy he played "Ciribimibin," and at the introduction of a gypsy theme Herbert's "My Little Gipsy Sweetheart."

The Capitol included many fine subjects from Kinograms, one being tree-planting by dynamite, another an array of carrier pigeons, just returned home from the front, all seemingly in good condition and able to eat corn. An enormous pig rookery in California furnished a lot of laughs. There is a strange bond between human beings and pigs. Shots of mining operations in Illinois, ruins in Italy, a toyland suggesting what is going to happen to father's pockets in the next week, and many famous stars making a flag for the Actors Equity Ball closed this section of the program.

Pryor's Band gave a concert consisting of a selection from "Quo Vadis," an opera by Nougues, the conductor's own popular "Whistler and his dog," and finishing with Elgar's first "Pomp and Circumstance" march. A Robertson-Cole Adventure Scenic gave a poetic exposition of a trip through Oregon mountains. This scenic is built on the Bruce plan and has very good titles. The organ used Cadman's "Land of the Sky-Blue Water" and improvisations for this feature, the music being well fitted to the picture.

The main feature this week is Mabel Normand in Goldwyn's "Jinx," a fantastic affair written by Norman Fife. This is a pretty good picture for patrons under twelve years of age -- in fact, it is a young folk's play from the start and should amuse children. There are some good children in it, including Frankie Lee and a naked cherub.

The comedy is Charlie Chaplin's "A Day's Pleasure" which from our observations is bound to make an impression on Broadway, as it is running from 49th to 14th streets, beginning with the Capitol and ending with Fox's Academy. Seasickness, the Ford and plenty of tar please seekers after fun, and the serious Charlie makes up for many things.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, December 28, 1919

Mabel Normand Gives Children Christmas Treat

Mabel Normand did her "bit" on Christmas day to make the holidays memorable for 5,000 orphan asylum children in New York by appearing in costume at the entertainment given at the Capitol Theatre under the auspices of Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Hearst. Manager E. J. Bowes of the Capitol Theatre turned the house over to the children for Christmas morning. In order that the performance conform to the holiday spirit, Manager Bowes of the Capitol Theatre arranged to have several vocalists and instrumentalists play Christmas carols and other songs with which the children were familiar. Besides several short pictures of interest to young people were shown.

The feature event of the program was Mabel Normand's appearance both on the screen and on the huge stage of the theatre as Jinx. In the picture, which was shown through the courtesy of Goldwyn, the kiddies howled with delight at the antics of Miss Normand as a circus waif who has all sorts of adventures in circus and in an orphan asylum, and who winds up her career as jinx when she marries the wild man of the circus.

When Miss Normand herself appeared in her screen costume of the Jinx and made a little speech to the children, the huge Capitol Theatre resounded to the most enthusiastic applause that has been heard in the theatre since its opening.

To please the children, Miss Normand came tumbling out upon the stage, doing the very stunts that revealed her as an acrobat well as an actress in her photoplay.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, December 28, 1919

" Louella Parsons

There are stars and stars, but only one Mabel Normand in the world. What other player can any one think of who would give up her entire Christmas morning to making the lame children of the city happy, and yet that is exactly what Miss Normand did. Those who know of the thousands of thoughtful things she does for other people are not surprised to hear of her getting up bright and early to be at the Capitol Theatre in time.

Her family were expecting her in Staten Island and she had to leave immediately after the performance to get there in time for Christmas dinner. It was like Mabel to forget all about herself. She is always thinking of other people.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, December 28, 1919

" Louella Parsons

Mabel Normand gave the clerks in the 10-cent store the thrill of their lives last Wednesday afternoon. Following the luncheon given for her at the Ritz, she decided upon a shopping tour at Woolworth's palace of bargains. And every clerk in the place stopped work to gaze at Mabel, saying in awed voices, as if they were speaking of an angelic vision right out of heaven:

"It is Mabel Normand!"

Several customers failed to share this thrill and were obviously annoyed at the clerks' failure to attend them. Even the floorwalker -- Oh, yes, indeed, the 10-cent store has a floorwalker; I never knew it either until I accompanied Mabel on her shopping expedition -- stopped pacing up and down to assist the little lady in finding what she wanted.

But he had a terrible blow. In a collection of motion picture stars' photographs which we stopped to examine there wasn't a single one of Miss Normand. The floorwalker was so embarrassed at this oversight that someone came to the rescue by suggesting he had probably sold all of Miss Normand's photographs. It will be a safe bet to go and ask for them now, for between Ralph Block and that floorwalker one thing is certain in the future -- here will be pictures galore of our little Mabel.

1920

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, January 6, 1920

Returns to Culver City

" Louella Parsons

It had to be. Mabel Normand had to leave New York and all her million and nine fans here to return to California and start work on "Maggie," her next Goldwyn picture. She put off the evil day just as long as she could, and finally when she did decide to leave town she left in such a typical Mabel hurry that not half of her friends knew she had departed.

Our first knowledge that she had left town came in a telegram of farewell from Streator, Illinois. Not knowing she had checked out from her hotel, and expecting to see her at dinner Sunday, it was somewhat of a shock to learn she was on her way to the Coast.

But being a creature of impulse, everyone expects Miss Normand to act on them: and everyone loves her for being as she is.

* from *Photoplay*, February 1920

Trying to get to see Mabel Normand, alone, is like trying to interview the Sphinx, with a party of Cook's tourists around. Mabel was late. Of course, interesting women are always late. But Mabel wasn't only late; she mistook a minute for a rubber band, and stretched it into an hour. I stood there, in the Ritz, watching the world go by, that part of the world that causes race suicide among fur-bearing animals, prosperity among jewelers, and distress among husbands -- their own, and other people's. Finally, Mabel came -- a little girl, and the thing that strikes you most about her is her childish, eager, pouting mouth -- it gives her an Alice-in-wonderland look, that her eyes, a little deeper and browner and sadder than you'd expect, contradict. And she wore one of those S.R.O. dresses -- you know; standing-room-only. "Listen, look"-- She made me think of one of Booth Tarkington's seventeen year old ladies. "They're some people waiting to see. I told 'em I'd be here -- we'd better go." We rode through the park -- even a

traffic cop said "Hello" to her. She talked -- "Happiness," said Mabel, "is simply a state of mind. I've never lost my mind. When things go wrong with you -- kid yourself." I think if someone dared her to play it, she'd jazz Juliet. I fell for Mabel. You would, yourself.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, Sunday, February 1, 1920

" Louella Parsons

Mabel Normand's one ambition in life when she was in New York was to get the proper sort of vehicle. She has in her young life had some roles which she wishes she might forget. Samuel Goldwyn has determined to let Miss Normand have her own way in getting better vehicles; in fact, he insists that her future stories be suitable to her. "The Slim Princess" will give her one of the most delectable roles of her career. No one doubts the Goldwyn Company will utilize all the possibilities and make a production every one will enjoy. There is an abundance of opportunity for settings, location and costuming.

* from *Wid's Daily*, February 1, 1920

A Wonderful Comedy and All to Victor Schertzinger's Credit

**Mabel Normand in
"PINTO"**

Goldwyn

DIRECTOR.....Victor L. Schertzinger

AUTHOR.....Victor Schertzinger

SCENARIO BY.....Gerald C. Duffy

CAMERMAN.....George Webber

AS A WHOLE.....Comedy-drama with the accent all on the comedy; a sure-fire entertainment, best the star has done for this company.

STORY.....Approaches burlesque at times but always registers and retains interest.

DIRECTION.....Schertzinger certainly knows how to handle this star; has done a fine piece of work.

PHOTOGRAPHY...Very good.

LIGHTINGS.....Excellent.

CAMERA WORK...Good

STAR.....Registers wonderfully well in role built specially for her; gets over some great comedy business.

SUPPORT.....All good; Cullen Landis most acceptable leading man.

EXTERIORS.....Western and fashionable eastern stuff.

INTERIORS.....Appropriate

DETAIL.....Subject is particularly well titled, many of the lines being good for comedy.

CHARACTER OF STORY.....Cowgirl's experiences in the usually effete east.

LENGTH OF PRODUCTION.....About 5,000.

The only things that matter with many of Mabel Normand's Goldwyn pictures were story and direction. But in "Pinto" she has them both supplied in one fell swoop by none other than Victor Schertzinger, one time director for Charles Ray. "Pinto" is a great comedy, just the right sort of story for the star and one which has been screened with due regard for her talents in the comedy line. And it is to Schertzinger's credit. He seems to be one of the few old Ince directors who, on another lot, manages to retain the sure-fire Ince method of development of plot and general smoothness of action.

Then, too, that sense of comedy which Schertzinger evinced in handling the Ray subjects is again apparent here both in the writing and directing of "Pinto." He has not allowed himself to be hampered by any conventional comedy bounds and "Pinto" further reveals itself as a picture possessing considerable original and enriching comedy business, even though its actual frame-work is more or less of a scenario tin-type.

Pinto is a western girl who has been reared by five godfathers. She wears a sombrero, chaps, uses the lariat and rides as if she were a regular cowboy. Then there comes the time when her godfather in New York, Pop Audrey sends for her. Pop has great wealth and a wife who is a snob and, worse than that, deceitful. Pinto is of a mind that New York is a big ranch and receives an awful shock when she gets there in company with Looey, her ancient tutor and companion.

There follows her initiation into society, her romance with Bob De Witt and her final unmasking of Mrs. Audrey's deceit before Pop. And the end finds her on her way back west with Bob and Pop as companions. Scenes that are sure-fire laugh-getters are Pinto's meeting with Pop in the course of which she breaks up Mrs. Audrey's tea, Pinto and Looey wandering around lower New York asking where Pop Audrey lives. Bob's instructions to Pinto on how to act with men during which sequence he makes love to her, and society's frantic efforts to escape when Looey, filled with red-eye shoots up a lawn party.

Miss Normand is well supported by Cullen Landis as leading man and by George Nichols as Pop Audrey. Others are Edythe Chapman, Hallam Cooley and Edward Johnson.

Give it the Limit in Advertising and Exploitation

Box Office Analysis for Exhibitor

There isn't a single doubt but that "Pinto" is going to register strongly with every sort of audience. Its appeal isn't limited to any class or classes. You know how even and well running the Ray pictures were that Schertzinger made for Ince. Well, he's got the same wonderful smoothness into this feature, and what with the good stuff he had put into the story in the way of comedy, he's succeeded in making a wonderfully fine picture.

Give it the limit in advertising and exploitation. The business you do on it should only be confined to the capacity of your house. Advertise it to the kids, advertise it to the old folks that like a good comedy. Play it up in every conceivable fashion for it's going to "get" any and all audiences and you won't have the smallest kick after it's all over.

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, February 5, 1920

“PINTO”

Mabel Normand Is Full of Pep at the Capitol This Week

It is a fact which seems strange in these advanced days but which is nevertheless true, that in fiction and on the screen when East meets West virtue is always on the side of the latter. It would probably prove a profitable expedition if some enterprising naturalist armed himself with the necessary implements and went into the well known wild-and-woolly and tried to bag a real western snob. According to the ritual of the romance writers, the East is the sole producer of snobbery. “Pinto” is no exception to the rule. But Mabel Normand is so indomitably amusing and effervescent that one almost forgets to question the conventional characters and situations of the picture. There are of course some incidents in “Pinto” which are different and, thank heaven, not common to life in the effete East. For example, Pinto, on one occasion lassooes a young man who is standing under her window and drags him up into her room to save him from a scolding.

The story recounts the adventures of a wild young creature of the ranch who comes to New York and falls into immediate disfavor with her snobbish hostess. The host is goodhearted, however, because he is an ex-ranchman. Pinto rewards him for his kindness by catching his wife in an affair and exposing her. Whereupon the ex-ranchman returns to his ranch accompanied by Pinto and her newly acquired sweetheart.

Not much of a story to offer to a sophisticated audience, but to see Miss Normand romping through the role of Pinto, makes up for a great deal. A buoyant personality and a store of experience in how to make the most of a good situation make her a real pleasure to watch. The supporting cast is entirely satisfactory, and the direction excellent. Taking it all in all, an evening spent with “Pinto” is quite worth while, provided you don’t want to take your entertainment too seriously.

One of the big incidents in the story is the charity entertainment which the lady of the house is planning. For once she and her husband are enthusiastic over the same thing, and Pinto shares their enthusiasm. Mabel Normand always has to be engaged in staging some private circus, if not for an orphan asylum as in “Jinx,” then for a society show or some other gathering. At any rate, an alcoholic participant rides into the scene on horseback and causes a most alarming situation.

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, February 7, 1920

There is only one Mabel Normand. Consequently, there is nothing to compare her with. If you like her you like her, and if you don’t, you don’t. In the latter taste, you are indeed to be pitied if you find yourself compelled to sit through a Mabel Normand picture. Luckily there are few members of the screen loving public who don’t like Mabel, and their number is becoming less all the time. Anyone who can sit through “Jinx” and come away without profound respect for Miss Normand’s comedy ability, is indeed exceptional.

The Jinx is the nickname of an orphan who is some way has become attached to a circus. She brings disaster to everybody she comes in contact with, and is treated accordingly. Her greatest misdemeanor, however, occurs when she takes the place of the serpentine dancer and disgraces the show before all who might possibly get it out of its financial difficulties. The dire fate that is sure to overtake her when she and the manager get together causes her to run away. An orphan asylum offers the most convenient refuge, and here she stages an amateur circus which is a riot of amusement. Here also she is found by the wild man of the show, who does not share the company’s prejudice against her, and we are left to suppose that at some date after the end of the picture the two become a happy bride and groom.

Obviously such a story as this is not sufficient to entertain even the most simple minded audience without mammoth assistance from the cast. In this case the cast is ninety-nine per cent Mabel Normand.

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, February 19, 1920

Dinner to Goldwyn

If it excites you any to know it, a dinner was given last Tuesday night in honor of Samuel Goldwyn, president of the Goldwyn Pictures Corporation, by Vice-President Abraham Lehr, at the Alexandria. Among those present were Thompson Buchanan, J. G. Hawks, Reginald Barker, Victor Schertzinger, A. G. Gibbons, Gouvernor Morris, Henry Ittleson, Sidney Olcott, T. Hays Hunter, Mabel Normand and Tom Moore.

Mr. Goldwyn made an interesting speech outlining the aims and ambitions of the Goldwyn organization.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, March 25, 1920

Mabel Normand Here

The friends of Mabel Normand are due for a shock. With her usual vivacious manner of giving those she likes a surprise, Miss Normand arrived in New York without saying a word to any one. Shopping is her purpose, and she has been here two days, keeping herself and her mission so completely hidden no one would have guessed she was in the city if she hadn’t forgotten to wear a veil while she was buying out the Fifth avenue shops.

One thing about Mabel, her friends love her so much no one ever pays any attention to a little thing like her failure to give a ring on the telephone or drop a note announcing her presence in the city.

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, March 26, 1920

Mabel Normand Rests

Mabel Normand Goldwyn star is taking a short rest in between pictures. She has finished “The Slim Princess,” and is recreating in the mountains for a few days.

* from *Photo-Play World*, May 1920

“ Truman B. Handy

Mabelescent: Which, Although Unclassified, Typifies the Normand Naivete

You won’t find the word “mabelescent” in the dictionary because it isn’t there. Nor is it of common usage. -- it was invented especially to fit Mabel Normand, simply because there isn’t any other phrase at all indigenous to the vivacious one. And everybody on the “lot” is using it.

The impulsive Miss Normand expresses herself as “flattered;” says that it pleases her to have a word coined in her honor. But in the case of “mabelescent” the coining wasn’t an honor; it was a necessity, or so I am told.

“Oh, cootie.”

It sounded very sweet, but somewhat uncertain, and not knowing to what the feminine voice referred, we at once drew conclusion, having heard of the various varieties of tricks so catalogued by our returned soldier friends. The owner of the voice was nowhere in evidence, and we had vivid mental pictures of some downtrodden “extra” girl with a burning ambition to get ahead, receiving a directorial rebuke or something.

But there wasn’t a soul in sight, except a petite person, whom we found around the corner of a “set” who was dressed in a cotton nightgown of voluminous folds and wrinkles, who wore a funny little hat over her left ear, a pair of Number Six shoes and a man’s overcoat. Her hair was “just thrown together,” as she explained to us, she imagined she had a cold, and she was playing with a funny little kitten with large, blue saucer eyes -- the “cootie” in question.

And not to forget our sense of comic values may it be observed that Miss Normand, as the trig person in the nightgown proved to be, was enjoying her leisure in a luxurious studio drawing-room, roofed with glass and canvas, its drab-colored walls hung with drapes of dark brown velvet, renaissance furniture lending éclat to the atmosphere, and a large, bear-skin rug furnishing a foot-warmer for the gaminesque, mabelescent creature before us.

“Oh,” she greeted us. “This is a shock. Cootie, behave yourself. I don’t like familiarity, not even from cats.”

Miss Normand is a distinct surprise, one of those interesting persons who talk about woman suffrage, who is as human as everybody around her, who likes ham and eggs and corn beef and cabbage like all the rest of us, and who, behind the mask of make-up, is a real woman, a “good scout,” as the studio hands term her.

One of the latter vouchsafed a certain amount of information concerning her. It seems that when she drew her first five hundred dollars for a week’s work before the camera some season ago she was quite upset, and wore a perplexed look about the studio. She seemed uneasy, and after various intimate conversations with her associates, proceeded downtown to purchase a car. At the gate she met a number of the men extras, who greeted her familiarly as “Mabel,” one of whom noticed her apparent discomfort.

“What AM I going to do with this money?” she asked him in reply to his question. “I never can spend it, not even if I buy a motor.”

Whereupon she at once proceeded to distribute it, in denominations of tens and twenties, to her less fortunate brothers of the studio.

“I couldn’t run a car if I had one,” she remarked during the distribution process, “and I don’t like a man in uniform perched on the front seat.”

At the studios they will tell you that Miss Normand is impulsive, generous, spontaneous, which the following will illustrate.

In one of her productions, “When Doctors Disagree,” the company was on location at a reform school near Los Angeles. Miss Normand, the director and the remainder of the workers had been “shooting” for a short time in the spacious grounds, when it was noticed that a number of the boys of the institution were watching Miss Normand. Shortly after lunch one little fellow, slipping away from his associates, commenced to pick a bouquet of flowers from the garden. However, every time an austere-looking guard was seen to approach, the child would hide the bunch of blooms behind his back, resuming his flower gathering when apparently unobserved. Miss Normand watched him with interest, and was on the verge of speaking to him when she noticed a larger boy steal up behind him and snatch the bunch from his hand.

At once he proceeded to Miss Normand, and handed it to her, at which the younger boy commenced to cry, thus attracting the guard’s attention. He was severely reprimanded for picking the flowers, while the other boy was probably put in solitary confinement for his offense. Meanwhile, however, the various other inmates of the school completely gleaned the garden and hedges of their blooms, piling them in Miss Normand’s car. She tried to pity the first offender by offering him sort of gift, only to learn that he could receive nothing, but that perhaps the guards would let him keep a photograph.

The next day a second surprise was accorded the school when Miss Normand arrived in her car, bearing in one hand a photograph in a splendid silver frame, and in the other a permit from the county authorities to take the juvenile offender for a motor ride.

Miss Normand has probably had as varied a career as anyone in motion pictures. She first appeared before the camera in the never-to-be-forgotten Keystones, in which she won for herself the reputation of being the first screen comedienne to have an unflagging sense of comedy, a beautiful face and a cast-iron constitution.

Off-stage Miss Normand is beautiful, with an exquisite natural color in her face, curly hair of soft black, and large, expressive brown eyes. She wears extremely modish clothes, but the screen seems to demand that she be a gamin. And by nature she is not a gamin. When her comedy make-up is off she looks and acts like any other healthy, pretty American woman who does her own shopping, casts her own vote and is otherwise herself and no one else. Because she is a comique, she is thought of as hoyendish. Miss Normand’s gravity is far more compelling than her seriousness. She is always amusing, and funniest when she tries to be serious. She has a philosophy all of her own, namely, that God is good, American is Arcady, motion pictures are the greatest thing in life, and her mother is the most wonderful person in the world.

Which latter fact shows that her heart is still in the right place.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, May 2, 1920

” Margaret Ettinger

Los Angeles --- After resting a month upon the completion of “The Slim Princess,” Mabel Normand began work again this week. Her new story is “Rosa Alvara,”¹⁷⁵ with Victor Schertzinger directing.

¹⁷⁵ i.e., *What Happened to Rosa*

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, May 9, 1920

" Frances Agnew

Mabel Normand and director Victor Schertzinger, Hugh Thompson, Doris Pawn, Tully Marshall, Eugenie Besserer and Buster Trow departed for San Francisco, where they are taking exteriors for "Rosa Alvara," by Pearl Curran.

* from *Variety*, May 21, 1920

Mabel Normand On Speaking Stage¹⁷⁶

Mabel Normand is to debut on the speaking stage in the fall, having signed a contract with A. H. Woods. The picture star was secured by Rufus LeMaire when the latter was here several weeks ago.

The piece is said to have the title of "Go Easy, Mabel." Miss Normand is under contract with Goldwyn until fall. She drew attention first in supporting Charlie Chaplin and reached film stardom when Goldwyn entered the field.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, May 23, 1920

" Louella Parsons

Mabel Normand believes she knows how Nicky Arnstein succeeded in fooling the public. Just a little artful disguise, cleverly applied, does the trick. She was in San Francisco, wither she had gone to make some scenes in "Rosa Alvara," a forthcoming Goldwyn picture. According to a member of the party, it was arranged that she dive from a boat. A big crowd gathered at the pier. When Mabel heard of the curious mob assembled to watch her stunt, she decided to fool the crowd gathered there to see her perform.

So she put a bath robe over her gown, borrowed a soft hat from one of the men and threw a bath towel over her shoulder. With the addition of dark glasses on her nose, the disguise was complete, and she walked through the crowd without any one recognizing her.

"Seems to me," said Mabel afterward, "that it would be a mighty easy trick to disguise one's self and fool the police if they wanted one, but one didn't want to be had."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, June 6, 1920

" Frances Agnew

Los Angeles, May 31 -- Mabel Normand returns from New York within the week to begin work with Director Victor Schertzinger on "Head Over Heels," the play which served Mizi Hajos on the stage. Incidentally, Goldwyn folk here emphatically deny the local story that Miss Normand has cut short her Goldwyn contract to appear on the stage under the management of A. H. Woods. They insist Miss Normand is to remain loyal to her film public for some time yet.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, June 13, 1920

Madge Kennedy, Mabel Normand and Tom Moore may like to read this story -- then again they may not. It is difficult to decide whether or not it is a compliment to the company's stars. The story ran in the Canton (Ohio) Repository, as an interview with Dr. A. G. Hyde, superintendent of the Massillon State Hospital on entertainment for the insane. In it, he says "the insane have their movie favorites just as other movie fans have. The patients in the Massillon Hospital seem to prefer pictures featuring Madge Kennedy, Mabel Normand and Tom Moore. Other players are popular, too, but these three are the favorites."

* from *Los Angeles Times*, June 13, 1920

Mabel Normand Resumes

After having been delayed in her current picture, "Head Over Heels," for two days due to an accident to her eyes, Mabel Normand, Goldwyn star, resumed work Monday.

The accident happened last Saturday at the studio. The glass interior of a Thermos bottle containing hot coffee broke and particles of glass flew into Miss Normand's eyes. This glass was removed by the studio physician, and after suffering greatly for two days, Miss Normand feels that her two lovely optics are now quite out of danger.

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, June 19, 1920

HOW TO BE A COMEDIENNE

By Mabel Normand

I am not a highbrow. If I were I wouldn't be earning my living by being funny -- or trying to be. I know more about jazz than I do about classical music. Not that I'm not fond of a concert now and then, but on the whole I like syncopation better. My heart beats to a jazz tune I guess. The world goes round to the sound of the international rag, as Irving Berlin said; and I think the rag he meant was that of laughter and pleasure and joy. It's a good tune! I know it by heart; and my ambition is to be able to play it on the old piano of the world with my eyes shut.

I think that.

One of the secrets of being a comedienne is in knowing jazz because when you know the syncopated tunes you know the songs to which the average heart responds, and so, in a way you know humanity. To be a comedienne you've got to be human. That's the truth of the matter. You've got to appreciate that side of people which is queer, ridiculous, and yet lovable. You can't make people laugh just by being odd. You've got to be more than that. You've got to be a little bit pathetic.

When people laugh most the tears start from their eyes, because laughter and pain aren't nearly so far apart as they seem to be. I sometimes think they are twins and you can't knock against their cradle without disturbing both of them, although, if you're lucky, laughter will be louder than his brother. But you can never tell.

¹⁷⁶ Although Mabel did not leave the screen at this time, in 1925 she did enter into a contract with A. H. Woods to do the stage play *The Little Mouse*. This clipping reveals that her interest in appearing on the stage began years before she actually appeared in that play.

And that's not the half of it, dearie, as the funny-men say in the papers. Try to burlesque somebody. You'll notice that you probably do it with the sort of a brush that the bill-board posters use while small boys admiringly surround them. But you won't appear as clever to grown-ups as the poster-pasters do to the younger generation. Your brush is too thick, too wide, too everything. Burlesque is a delicate art, believe me. I'm no highbrow, as I said before, but I know that. And I know too, that when you make fun of people you have to mimic them with just the slightest exaggeration in order to be really funny. If you overdo it, you ruin, you ruin your performance, and it's pretty hard not to overdo your act. You have to watch every gesture, every action, no matter how small. A careless lifting of eyebrows may spoil a perfectly good hand-gesture. Watch your step all the time, and watch everything else you have about you, too. If you seem to have any idea that you're playing at something, you won't get across.

That brings me to the serious side of being funny. To be a comedienne you have to take yourself with the seriousness of a politician receiving the nomination for alderman from the hands of his fellow citizens. Charlie Chaplin, for instance, rarely smiles in his pictures. That's one of the reasons he's so funny! And if he does smile, it is pathetically and just enough to balance his tremendous gravity. When he sees a big policeman he takes off his hat to him with an air which implies that it is the most serious and sincere act in his life. If he throws a brick at the copper he does it with the same air. He takes his victories and defeats in the same melancholy way -- almost.

To be a comedienne, don't try to teach a lesson. Leave that to Longfellow and the poets. Just try to be human and serious. Try to remember that people's spirits are raised by seeing a man chase a hat down the street.

There's something funny in the misfortunes of our neighbors. It isn't a kindly thing, but it is a fact that there's no getting around.

To be a comedienne you have to have something about you that is appealing. It's hard to say just what the thing is, because you can't put your hands on it; it isn't a block of wood or a glass of wine. It's a way of quaintness, a pleasant quality that's natural and not artificial.

And here again we come to the root of humor that I mentioned before: being human. That's being natural. When I played the part of a poor little hoyden in one of my pictures -- "Jinx" -- I tried to remember during the entire making of the production that I was a homeless little wretch grateful for kindness from anyone. In another picture I played the part of a little slavey who longed from the kitchen to reach the bliss of the grand ball-room upstairs. And when I reached there and played the part of a lady I tried not to forget that I had been a slavey a few moments before. Things puzzled me a little; I wasn't quite sure that what I did was the correct thing, but I was as good as the rest in my heart and proud of my clothes; oh, so very, very proud of my new, fashionable clothes!

I don't think that any correspondence course will make a comedienne out of a girl. But neither do I believe that it's all a gift. It requires a facility and a lot of hard work. Practice makes perfect, I've heard. Who was it said that creation is ten percent inspiration and ninety per cent perspiration? Not a pretty picture, but a true one. Work, work, work. Study every little detail of your personality. Try to find out what little peculiarities you have that can be developed for audiences and the director. Stand before your mirror and make faces at yourself. Twist your features, your arms, your body. Find out if you really have a sense of humor in your funny bone and if your spine appreciates a joke.

Pay particular attention to your mouth. I can't figure out how many different ways a pair of lips can be funny.--and charming. Men try to figure it out, but even they haven't succeeded in finding the answer, I hear. If you keep your hair in a Grecian knot you may look like a goddess, but if you plaster it down over your ears and leave a little loop hanging over your left eye you may look more appealing than in the other pose -- and genuinely funny, too.

Don't set any standard for yourself. I have discovered that the things which make people roar with laughter in one part of the country will have just the other effect elsewhere. Geography is a peculiar thing. It seems that climate has an effect on people's humor. A southerner will laugh at a houn' dawg joke that will bore a northerner. That's one of the fifty-seven reasons why it's so hard to find out what makes everybody laugh -- because there are things that do,¹⁷⁷ and the real comedienne is the one who gets hold of those things and uses them until they finally lose out. And remember this; if you are lucky enough to discover a gesture with a universal appeal, never forget that its get-across qualities are temporary.

Don't work a gesture to death. If you do, you'll find out quickly enough that you have lost out with the trick. There's an art in knowing just when to drop the thing. It isn't when it's at the height of its popular appeal and it isn't when it's an eye-sore to the public. My own humble opinion is that it's just after it has reached its climax as an applause-getter. But you have to be ready with something new. That's why there's so much work in being funny. You can't afford to lay your wits aside for a moment. They have to be laboring for you all the time, and not part of the time. And you'll find they won't labor if you don't.

In my forthcoming Goldwyn picture "The Slim Princess" I had to keep my wits working all the time I was making scenes, notwithstanding the fact that a great humorist, George Ade, was responsible for the situations. But even Ade will not aid you -- pardon the pun -- unless you Ade yourself. I had to keep at top speed every moment in order to have my action suit the caption and the cut-in and the close-up.

And I guess that's all. Counting up what I've said I think that I want to emphasize again the ground from which we have to begin -- being human, except the villain and even he isn't a perfect thirty-six of his species. Forget all about "showing-off;" remember that you're sincere and fresh and kind (I don't like malicious humor). Hum a jazz tune and don't be a snob. If you are, you won't be a comedienne. But above all, don't neglect the jazz element. The world goes around to the sound of it, to the sound of the jazz of laughter!

* from *Variety*, July 2, 1920

THE SLIM PRINCESS

This Goldwyn feature with Mabel Normand is founded on George Ade's story of the same name and is full of magnificent sets and backgrounds, all beautifully photographed. In fact, George Webber, who took these pictures, is the real star of them. He caught some difficult action, too, and did the job just right, and while the comedy didn't get any particular laughs out of the crowd at the Capitol Sunday evening, the produces needn't fear to splurge on the

¹⁷⁷ To be read: There are things "that do" make everyone laugh.

expense and effect of the production. Victor L. Schertzinger directed, showing little imagination, but getting fair and average results. His attempts to work in forced slapstick comedy produced the chief faulty effect, and it was out of harmony with the richness and splendor of the settings.

The action when it finally developed was quick and moving and excited interest. The story may be dimly remembered as a farce set to music with Elsie Janis starred. It concerns the attempt of a young American to carry off and marry the slim Princess Kalora. No one in her own country wants to marry the Princess, where woman are supposed to grow more beautiful with every meal, that is to say, fatter. The fatter the woman, the more desirable she is in the eyes of the Morovenians, but Kalora is not fat and never has been. A revengeful tutor helps keep her thin by feeding her pickles, but in order to marry her off they insert inflated rubber bags in her clothes. She spoils this delightful effect by stepping on a cactus. Then a young American who has never in this country seen any slender women of the type he admires, spies her and makes a dead play for her. Why he should climb a wall to go to a formal garden party is a question, but his breaks into the harem later on are properly made in that manner. His winning of the girl completes the story.

This is by long odds the handsomest Goldwyn product in some time. Mabel Normand adds to it her good humored and attractive presence and is really very winning and a drawing card. Tully Marshall and Russ Powell give cleverly exaggerated portraits and Lillian Sylvester was fat enough to have tempted any Morovenian. (Leed.)

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, July 3, 1920

"The Slim Princess"

There undoubtedly were some attractive features about the mythical Oriental country which George Ade discovered in his literary expedition, but it would be a bad place for the writer of "Eat and Grow Thin" to ply his trade. For be it known that the standards of feminine beauty in that strange land were based almost entirely on avoirdupois. The hand picked beauties who have made Mr. Ziegfeld and Mr. Sennett famous would probably have been laughed at in Morovenia.

Mabel Normand, according to the scenario, is unfortunate enough to be a lady of this land. In fact, her father is Governor-General. But the hard part of it all is that, according to the laws of the land, no younger daughter may be married while she has an unmarried older sister. Now Mabel happens to be an older daughter and her younger sister is a vision of elephantine loveliness.

When her father receives a most advantageous offer for her hand, he is up against the problem of getting Mabel married off first. But no one would look at Mabel's sylph-like ugliness, so she is dressed in a rubber suit and made guest of honor at a huge garden party. Things go beautifully until her costume is punctured and she is revealed as thin.

Of course she is disgraced and her father's plans are spoiled. But while she is mourning in the garden a young American of great wealth chances to be passing the palace walls, and for reasons best known to himself chooses to enter the royal domain. Here he is surprised and delighted to come upon a real girl, one whose proportions are more in keeping with the styles he is used to in the well known U.S.A.

It is not unnatural then that he should immediately fall to work trying to convince the lady that his affections are undying. It is far from strange also that Mabel should be pleased at his attentions. But the servants of the household interrupt the tête-à-tête and drive the young lover away. Not before he has sworn to return and win her, however.

Eventually he works up the courage to speak to father. Father is not overjoyed, because unfortunately the President of the United States is not in the habit of granting lands and titles to his subjects. Such a state of affairs seems very queer to the Governor-General, and even at the risk of not finding a husband for his ugly duckling, he cannot give his consent to such a marriage.

Such a little thing as parental disapproval, however, does not please the young American and he remains determined to win his lady. Of course he does it too. The doing of it involves a trip to America for Mabel where needless to say she shines as a beauty, and generally has the time of her life. But when she returns she is no heftier than she ever was, and after much fuss and many altercations the romance ends as all romances should end.

Miss Normand is very funny as the slim princess, and pictorially leaves nothing to be desired.

* from *Los Angeles Evening Express*, July 3, 1920

Mabel Has Pickle Passion

Mabel Normand use to dislike pickles immensely. Sour, sweet, dill, mixed, none of the varieties made hit with her at all. Now all is changed. She specializes on this article of foodsome diet. Cranks declare pickles are not a food, but never mind that -- and she finds they agree with her, hence her sudden onslaught on the pickle market. All which goes to prove that a lot of things people dislike improve acquaintance.

It came about through the fact that some of the scenes in Mabel's latest picture, "The Slim Princess," which comes to the California tomorrow, required her to eat pickles. She had to eat them whether she like them or didn't like them. For in this picture she is the slim princess in a land where a woman is considered beautiful in proportion to her weight. Her family are very desirous that she increase her avoirdupois. But her tutor, who cherishes an old grudge against her father, sees his opportunity to get even and feeds her pickles to keep her thin.

When they opened the first bottle of sour dills on the set and handed it, with a fork, to the star, her face was a study in disgust. But she has never yet been bluffed by any stunt demanded in her pictures and she proceeded to eat the pickles with much avidity as though she really liked them. She was rather astonished when she found her-self between scenes one afternoon, abstractly munching one of the hitherto despised things and liked it.

After which time they had to keep the pickle bottle out of her sight or have no pickles for the taking of the scenes.

* from *Boy's Cinema*, July 3, 1920

[captions to pictures accompanying piece: *This extraordinary machine¹⁷⁸ was built by D. E. Hunt, a mechanical engineer of California. It whistles, rings a bell, and naturally attracts considerable attention when it steams up the street. Mabel was the first girl to drive this funny machine, which will do nearly 100 miles an hour...If you want to write to her, address your letter: Mabel Normand, Goldwyn Studios, Culver City, California]*

Mabel Normand, the popular and dashing film comedienne, was born in Boston.

She worked under Mack Sennett, the well-known producer of film comedies, for several years, and soon became an international screen favorite.

Later Mabel left Keystone Comedies, and organised [sic] her own company, but after a while she gave up this venture, and worked for Goldwyn.

Some of Mabel Normand's most notable recent productions are "Joan of Plattsburg," "Peck's Bad Girl," "Sis Hopkins," "The Pest," "When Doctors Disagree," and "Upstairs."

Mabel's latest picture deals with an imaginary place call Morovenia, where only stout women are considered beautiful.

Mabel, however, is slim, and according to the accepted standards of beauty obtaining in that land, she had to make herself stout somehow.

For this reason her producer obtained a rubber suit for Mabel to wear. During the filming of the scenes of this picture, Mabel appeared at the studio each morning, her own dainty, mischievous imp of activity.

Then, when the rubber suit was put on with the assistance of her maid, the two men gripped the handles of the pump attached to the suit, and worked strenuously for some minutes.

Dainty Mabel soon became very plump, and as they kept working at the pump she grew more portly every minute.

She became so fat in the end that if she sat down she couldn't get up without assistance, and if she lost her balance, she was helpless until picked up by someone.

You will agree that this picture is one of the funniest which Mabel Normand has yet appeared in.

Mabel is very enthusiastic about her art, and she believes that there is more real hard work in making a comedy picture than in any other.

"The fact is," she says, "that everybody, or nearly everybody engaged in a comic film must be a real humorist, or the film will be sure to fall flat.

"It isn't enough for the principal player to be funny. All the minor characters, such as hotel servants, porters, tram-conductors, and so on, must also be able to raise laughs."

Mabel's childhood days were particularly happy ones, and this fact no doubt had a good deal to do with her present lively and joyous disposition.

There is no one on the screen quite like this fascinating artist.

It is not generally known that Mabel Normand was for some time an artist's model.

Her beauty and charm made her in great demand at most of the studios, but this work was not sufficient to satisfy Mabel's ambitions, and she decide to go on the stage.

Her first engagement was as a chorus girl, and incidentally this was also the last part she played on the legitimate stage. For one day she met her friend Alice Joyce, and Alice persuaded her to go with her to the old Biograph Company, where she was then engaged in film making.

This Mabel consented to do, and her producer at once recognized the possibility of Miss Normand's beauty and vivacity, and he at once gave her a long engagement.

Many of this favourite artist's earliest screen successes were made with that irresistible comedian, Roscoe Arbuckle, who is known to you all by the name of Fatty.

"Fatty" and "Mabel" together had a world-wide reputation for laughter-making.

Mabel Normand has some funny likes and dislikes.

The things she is most fond of, she said on a recent occasion are "dark windy days, and chocolate cake, and storms when houses blow down."

She was quite serious when she made this statement, although there was just a hint of mischief in the famous Mabel Normand eyes.

It is really impossible for Mabel to be very serious.

Her lovely eyes, which are dark brown are even more beautiful in real life than the screen discloses.

Mabel Normand, like most other screen artists, is very superstitious, and she always carries a tiny ivory elephant as a lucky charm.

She owns many wonderful and valuable jewels, although she rarely wears them on the screen.

If Mabel ever has time enough to spare from her screen work she intends to go to Paris for a long stay. This has been her one desire for a considerable time.

* from *Los Angeles Record*, July 3, 1920

" May Markson

If you ask any movie star what picture he or she likes best of those in which he or she has appeared, the answer will inevitably be, "The one I'm making now."

It's always the last picture that's the best to a real actor, and Mabel Normand is not the exception that proves the rule.

It occurred to me that movie fans who will see her in her latest release, "The Slim Princess," at the California next week, might like to know something about the personality of the vivacious star, so I went out to the Goldwyn studio to have a little chat with her.

She was just finishing a scene in her new production, "Head Over Heels," an adaptation of the play in which the winsome little musical comedy star, Mizzi Hajos, took Los Angeles by storm at the Mason a number of months ago.

¹⁷⁸ A small train locomotive that is driven like an automobile.

On Mabel's head rested a little flat black sailor. Her hair hung in two thick pigtailed down her back. She wore a green short skirt with white stripes, and black and white striped stockings with heavy brown cowhide shoes.

There was no make-up on her face, except that her eyelashes were beaded. She looked like a ludicrous little character that might have stepped out of an east side tenement in New York.

"Your paper did a splendid thing in getting after these fake movie schools," she remarked as soon as she knew who I was. "Everyone connected with them should be run out of town, and sent to the pen if they ever come back. I thought those articles were fine."

I decided right there that Mabel Normand was a young lady of intelligence, as well as beauty, and we got on intimate terms right away. The way to a newspaper man's heart is through boasting his paper, which applies to newspaperwomen, as well."

"Now tell me something about Mabel Normand," I demanded. "I've come here to turn you inside out for the benefit of the public, and I don't want to disappoint 'em."

"Oh, I've got an appointment with my dressmaker, and I've got to go right away, truly I must," Mabel exclaimed in a panicky voice.

After assuring her that the operation would be harmless, she consented to sit down beside me on a bench for five minutes, and I extracted the following:

She believes the world is in a condition now where people need to be amused rather than instructed.

She prefers the kind of parts she is playing, to any other type of character.

She goes to church every Sunday.

She likes to read.

When she finishes a picture she makes a bee-line for New York, even though she can be there only two or three days, in order to be with her mother and sister.

She likes to swim and ride and climb trees.

Sometimes she gets frightened at the stunts she is called upon to do, but she does them anyhow.

And she assures you that you'll laugh yourself into convulsions over, "The Slim Princess," but just wait until you see "Head Over Heels."

* from *Wid's Daily*, Sunday, July 4, 1920

Star's Work Stands Out in Weak Comedy Story

Mabel Normand in

"THE SLIM PRINCESS"

Goldwyn

DIRECTOR: Victor L. Schertzinger

AUTHOR: George Ade

SCENARIO BY: Gerald C. Duffy

CAMERAMAN: George Webber

AS A WHOLE: Very weak comedy plot made fairly entertaining by star's work

STORY: Little to it

DIRECTION: Has handled comedy sequences skillfully and given entire picture tasteful production

PHOTOGRAPHY: Very good

LIGHTINGS: Effective

CAMERA WORK: Very good

STAR: Gets over very good comedy business but story doesn't give her opportunities.

SUPPORT: Tully Marshall registers some laughs; Hugh Thompson is leading man

EXTERIORS: Contain good "mythical kingdom" atmosphere

INTERIORS: Same

DETAIL: All right

CHARACTER OF STORY: Troubles of slim princess in country where to be beautiful is to be fat

LENGTH OF PRODUCTION: About 5,000 feet

"The Slim Princess" gets over as a fairly entertaining comedy because of Mabel Normand's very capable work in a few sequences where she is given opportunities for the type of horseplay, which she can do so well. The story of this is very weak as slim as its leading character in fact and doesn't hold up the interest at all times the way a good comedy should.

However, the work is aided considerably by the rather fanciful production given it. The exteriors, the majority of which are laid in one of those mythical kingdoms, Morovenia in this instance are attractive and the interiors no less tasteful. As a result, "The Slim Princess" is always appealing to the eye and now and then to the visibilities.

The best sequence in the entire picture comes when the heroine, the slim princess; who has the misfortune to live in a kingdom where to be beautiful is to be fat dons an inflated rubber suit and endeavors to match her ample sister before the eyes of admiring swains. A subtitle which uses the line..."a full blown woman" also adds to the gayety. There are also some good bits in this sequence between the star and Tully Marshall who appears as her tutor.

The plot is simple in the extreme. Kalora, the slim princess, is unfashionable because she is under weight. Under the law of the kingdom, her younger and exceedingly stout sister cannot marry until she is disposed of. The rubber suit is tried on Kalora and things are going famously until she bumps into a plant with sharp leaves. Thereupon she actually shrinks before the horror-stricken eyes of the young man who previously admired her.

Kalora meets Pike, an American, who is the first one to admire her for her lack of fat. Later Kalora is sent to America by her father, who thinks possibly that some new-fangled health food will improve her. She again meets Pike there and their romance develops. There is a good laugh when Kalora returned home decked out in all the latest styles with her tutor wearing checks in his suit. And then they conclude with another good sequence when Pike comes to ask for her hand. The father mistakes which daughter he means and trots out fat one at first but matters are finally straightened out and everyone is happy.

They have left this story just about as George Ade wrote it and certain it is that he never wrote it for a picture. The rest of the cast including Hugh Thompson, Russ Powell, Lillian Sylvester, Harry Lorraine and Pomerny Cannon performs averagely but evince small comedy spirit.

Very Good Possibilities for Exploitation Here

Box Office Analysis for the Exhibitor

You will be able to get by with this with the average crowd while before admirers of Mabel Normand and those who have a fondness for George Ade's stuff; you ought to make a very good impression. It seems that they have adhered to the original plot pretty strictly. A more liberal course embracing a few changes and additions might have been advisable. They have changed better known stories and plays than. "The Slim Princess."

The premise of the picture offers you amusing advertising possibilities. Use a line such as "In Morovenia THIS was considered Beauty and THIS ugliness. Above the first "this" a picture of the fattest woman your artist can draw, above the second something as shapely as Mabel Normand. Any other ideas on this line will prove attractive. Play the star big and don't forget the author's name.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, July 4, 1920

" Louella Parsons

Mabel Has Her Say

Tully Marshall insists that it is true, but when he told it out of the Goldwyn studio there wasn't a person on the lot who would believe it. He says that whereas he never played a part until he was 19 he began working in the theatre at the age of 5. What, if he didn't play a part, did he do at that age? Well, he says he was not only call boy, but prompter. "Why not make it a really good story?" asked Mabel Normand. "I'm surprised that you don't claim to have been stage manager at least."

* from *Variety*, July 16, 1920

You can't always sometimes tell -- even the shrewdest guess wrong. When "Mickey" was offered State-right buyers a couple of years ago J. Frank Hatch, one of the cleverest of state-right purchasers, offered \$8,000 for "Mickey" for Ohio, refusing to raise his bid. He could have bought it for \$9,000. Harry Grelle, of Pittsburgh, paid \$12,000 for Ohio and \$10,000 for Pennsylvania for three year's lease of the picture, which still has a year to go. Up to this date Grelle has cleaned up a profit of \$323,000 on Ohio and Pennsylvania, the bulk of which was made in Ohio. At the conclusion of his lease of "Mickey" Grelle will retire, satisfied with his accumulated "pile."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, July 18, 1920

Grace Kingsley Says Its True

We accused Lucy Huffaker of faking the story about Mabel Normand and the song. But here is what Grace Kingsley has to say about it in the Los Angeles Times, so Lucy may be right after all.

"Even if you're a deacon you're not going to be able to make your feet behave! That is if you happen to hear the latest Tin Pan Alley sensation. The song is entitled 'A Musical Jekyll and Hyde,' and serve to put Mabel Normand, picture star, in the song writing class. In fact the ditty is the brain child of 'Ma' Mabel Normand and 'Pa' Victor Schertzinger. Miss Normand's clever director having written the music.

"The composition is being published by a well-known Eastern firm, but we'll beat 'em to it by publishing the chorus, which is all about a girl who loved to dance. It envisions the little shimmy kid the cafe hounds all know so well."

"She didn't care to stop for air.

When a saxophone would moan.

And 'pon my soul she'll lose control

When she'd hear a slide trombone.

When the jazz clarinet starts squealing,

She'll roll her eyes and look appealing.

Then, she'll shiver, boy, she'll quiver.

She loved each shimmy they'd give her.

A big base drum would make her numb

From her head down to her toes,

And a violin would make her given,

To any step her partner knows.

But when she'd play the organ up in the choir,

You could see the angels sitting there by her,

And they'd swell with pride as they sang beside

This musical Jekyll and Hyde."

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, July 31, 1920

Mabel Normand's Next

With Mabel Normand's next production, "What Happened to Rosa," ready for distribution the comedienne is now engaged in making another picture. It is "Head Over Heels," an adaptation of Edgar Allen Woolf's play in which Mitzi was starred.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, August 25, 1920

Mabel Normand Leaves

Having felt that a close communication with her New York modiste was absolutely necessary to her happiness, Mabel Normand, Goldwyn star, left yesterday for the eastern metropolis where she will spend her vacation between pictures.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, August 26, 1920

Mabel Normand Coming East

Mabel Normand is coming East and there is general rejoicing among her friends in general and in particular in the Goldwyn staff, with whom she is a great favorite. Miss Normand is coming to town for a holiday, the idea of heaven among motion picture stars being to be let loose in New York shops and to have the theatres of the metropolis at their disposal. Miss Normand left Los Angeles the day before yesterday and the Goldwyn offices are planning to send a delegation to the station to welcome her and bring her to the home office where an informal reception will be held in honor of the popular little star.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, September 5, 1920

She Is Sentimental

Mabel Normand perplexed the purchasing department at the Goldwyn studios the other day by ordering the scenario of "Head Over Heels," on which she was working, bound in leather. That in itself, of course, was not so surprising. The puzzling thing was that she asked to have two blank pages inserted in the front of the book. Everyone asked questions, but Mabel would vouchsafe no explanations -- until the book came from the binders. Then, with the fresh leathery smell still upon it, she presented it in turn to each member of "Head Over Heels" company, with a sweet command to write something in it. They all did, of course, from Hugh Thompson, her leading man, down through the whole cast.

Miss Normand says she is going to do the same thing with each picture in the future.

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, September 13, 1920

Dog Secret

Mabel Normand has a police dog she calls Gretel, which has caused her much worry since the war. Gretel was a Dachshund -- a prize one -- and the little comedienne was very fond of Gretel indeed. Now the so called police dog is a dark secret in her life, and has to be boarded out from kennel to kennel, the popular little actress stealing visits to pet from time to time under cover of night. Aya, a Chinese Chow, has displaced Gretel as the darling of the Normand establishment.

* from *The Watkins Express*, [N.Y.], October 6, 1920

"Miss Mabel Normand, the famous movie star, is a guest at the Glen Springs Hotel."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, October 17, 1920¹⁷⁹

" Louella Parsons

Mabel Normand has a pair of callused hands to prove she has been rustivating in Staten Island. She breezed into Florence Reed's dressing room at the new Times Square Theatre the other night and told of her efforts to conquer that fascinating game called golf. Also Mabel is trying to gain weight. She says she is putting on a pound a week. It seems only yesterday she was trying to get rid of an extra pound that she noticed had crept upon her unawares.

"I am not going back to the Coast," she said, "at least not until I make a picture in the East. The company promises me I may make my next picture here."

Mabel was very enthusiastic over "The Mirage."

"Make that last scene long," she told Florence Reed. "It is so wonderful, the audience want to hear that final sacrifice. It is superb."

* from *Screenland*, November 1920

from "Stars Among the Flowers"

Mabel Normand

Brilliant Zinnias, dancing, nodding

With your ruffled, petal bobbing --

Joining all in merry dance,

Fairy laughter, roguish glance --

Witching moods a-scintillating.

Hues that Fashion's imitating --

Which is flower, which is she --

How tell the Queen of Comedy?

* from *Variety*, November 11, 1920

Mabel Normand Better

Mabel Normand is recovering from her nervous breakdown at the Glen Springs Sanatorium near Elmira, N.Y.

Last week Miss Normand was able to go to Elmira to see Madge Kennedy in "Cornered" and visited Miss Kennedy back stage.

* from *Elmira Star-Gazette*, November 13, 1920

[from an interview with Madge Kennedy]

...Incidentally Miss Kennedy thought the reporter's note book (which wasn't used) was "cute" and she wrote a note to Miss Mabel Normand in the book asking that popular movie star to come back and chat between the next two acts. Miss Normand who was at the Lyceum last evening and Miss Kennedy became chums, while occupying adjoining dressing rooms in a movie studio a few years ago. Miss Normand in at the Glen Springs Sanitarium at the present time recovering from a nervous breakdown. Miss Kennedy was more than delighted with a gorgeous basketful

¹⁷⁹ See Dec. 11, 1920; *Picture Show* version of this same article by Parsons.

of chrysanthemums sent her by Miss Normand. The movie star, who occupied a box last night, will be remembered best as the star of "Mickey."

* from *Pictures and Picturegoer*, November 27, 1920

" Elsie Codd

Sidelights on the Stars: Mabel Normand

To begin with, I think that one of the nicest things I ever heard said about Mabel Normand came from a girl who had worked with her at the Sennett Studio in the old Keystone days.

"Mabel's just the same now as she used to be," she told me. "She's got the biggest heart in the whole wide world, and there's not an 'extra' girl who knows her who doesn't think her the dearest thing that ever happened."

Then this Normand enthusiast went on to tell me that, though her own knowledge of Mabel had been limited to just a mere passing acquaintanceship, she knew of dozens of girls--little nonentities all, at five dollars per diem--whom Mabel had helped when they were sick or stranded for a job, and how she would frequently give the last bill in her own weekly pay-envelope to enable a girl to buy the new frock that she needed for some special part.

"And the best and finest thing about her," my little friend concluded, "is that success hasn't spoiled this big generous heart of hers a tiny bit. Of course, she's earning ever so much more now than she did in those early days, but a bigger salary just means to Mabel that she's now able to give away more than she could conveniently manage in the old times and sort of act as an offset to the high cost of living. And she's still the best friend in the world of the little unknown extra 'girl.'"

And I should like to add at this juncture that you only need to hear all the kind things moving-picture people usually have to say about each other to thoroughly appreciate this loyal and unsolicited testimony of Mabel Normand's fellow-workers.

Mabel herself just strikes you that way. Though very "petite," she somehow conveys the impression of something big. She seems bubbling over with life and vivacity, and is the sort of girl you can readily imagine would invariably act on a first generous impulse. In her white silk skirt, dark-blue jersey and chic little dark-blue hat, she looked the real capable out-of-doors girl she is, and at the same time, in spite of a subtle suggestion of the tomboy, adorably feminine. She has a natural instinct for dressing suitably and well. I remember one day how a movie queen of the newly-rich type passed me on the Hollywood Boulevard driving her own sumptuously upholstered car in a Parisian semi-evening gown, a cloud of gauze and a large feather hat. Then hot on her track, Mabel whizzed past in defiance of every speed law in a neat little runabout, attired in a smartly tailored suit, and a neat closely fitting turban. It needed but a glimpse of the two faces to realise [sic] which of those girls was getting the most fun out of her ride.

It is almost superfluous to say that Mabel is the life and soul of the company with whom she happens to be working. Back in the old Sennett days, she used to burst into the studio of a morning with her cheery "Hello, girls and boys!" like an exhilarating breeze of a bright shaft of April sunshine. Possibly the atmosphere of most of the big studios has grown a bit more formal since those early days, but Mabel herself hasn't altered. Her morning greeting is still the same and there is a fine spirit of genuine "camaraderie" in her little working circle, a spirit that is not often found in the bustle and petty jealousies of a modern moving-picture studio.

It would require something in the nature of a catalogue to enumerate Mabel's numerous interests and hobbies. Everybody knows that she can dive and swim in the best Kellerman manner, also that she can rope a horse and ride a bucking bronco to the respected envy and admiration of every cowpuncher in Southern California. She has a whole menagerie of animal pets, and owns that if she adds any more to her collection she will have to board them out at Universal City or at Colonel Selig's famous Zoo. It was only recently that she was frustrated in a passionate desire to add a monkey to her already somewhat heterogeneous collection.

Mabel is not the type of girl whose interests are all in one groove. She is as fond of reading as she is of the outdoor life, and the books you will find in her library are not the kind you would usually associate with a comedy queen. Without being in the least bit obtrusively "highbrow," Mabel has a preference for such writers as Shaw and Balzac. Complete editions of their works are to be found on her well-stocked bookshelves, and she doesn't use her books as a receptacle for her letters or shopping-lists either.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 28, 1920

" Louella Parsons

Ten precious pounds have been gained by Mabel Normand, and she looks younger and prettier than ever. She went on a milk diet at Watkins Glen, went to bed when the moon came up and arose at the crack of dawn, and it has done wonders for her. She doesn't look like the Mabel who grew so thin and white and worried all her friends a short month ago. She has regained all her oldtime "pep" and looks like sweet sixteen.

"I refuse to make another picture until I can get the story I want," she said. Mabel, with determination in her eye, is very likely to get what she wants. She knows what she wants.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 28, 1920

Mabel Normand Comedy Ready

Mabel Normand, who for a number of years has been one of the most consistently hard workers at the Goldwyn studio in Culver City, Calif., is taking a vacation in the East preparatory to starting another comedy production at the Coast Studios. Her latest picture, "What Happened to Rosa," is now ready for release.

Although Miss Normand is determined to keep away from the atmosphere of motion pictures while on her vacation, she made an exception to her rule last week by appearing in person at the Opera House, Watkins, N.Y., on the evening that "Pinto" was the attraction. The children of the village were invited as the guests of the Goldwyn star and the theatre was crowded to capacity and an enthusiastic audience of youngsters and their elders.

That "What Happened to Rosa" is destined to be a worthy successor to "Upstairs," "Jinx," "Pinto," and other of Miss Normand's earlier successes is evidenced by the approval with which it was received at several special presentations. Adapted from a Saturday Evening Post story, the plot is replete with unexpected twists and there is an

abundance of action. As a romantic sales girl in a big department store, Miss Normand has the type of role that gives full scope for her gifts as an interpreter of eccentric comedy.

There is a happy mingling of romance and realism in the unfolding of the story (in) which Rosa experiences surprising adventures after her encounter with a fortune teller. Casting aside her drab apparel, the sales girl pretends to be a Spanish dancer, assuming all the airs and graces of a courted beauty. Her friends are convinced that she has gone insane, but this in no way disturbs Rosa's dream of conquest, a handsome young physician being the particular object of her admiration.

The climax of the romantic episode comes when the girl, in all the splendor of her Spanish costume, attends a masquerade dance on board an excursion boat. Her companions do not recognize her, nor does the young physician, who is captivated by the beauty and grace of the mysterious girl. When discovery of her deception is imminent, Rosa jumps overboard and swims ashore. Among the most amusing passages in the picture are those in the concluding reel that reveals Miss Normand in the ragged clothes of a street urchin that she dons in order to gain access to the doctor's office.

* from *Picture Show* [a British publication], December 11, 1920

" Louella Parsons

Notes and News From New York

Mabel Normand, scintillating, effervescent, and wonderously gowned in a pale blue and pink evening frock, came dashing into Florence Reed's dressing-room the other evening.

Florence Reed is making a great success in "The Mirage," a new play which recently opened in one of New York's new theatres, and Mabel's visit was to tell Florence that she had cried her eyes out over the sad ending of the play.

"Why didn't you let Renie go to the country and start life anew?" said Mabel.

"Renie isn't a really big character," explained Florence. "A girl used to the flesh-pots of life, and who has never paid any attention to the demands of society wouldn't be content to live in a little country town. She would leave her husband and come back to her lover in a month."

"The country isn't so bad," argued Mabel, "not when you get used to it. Look at these," she said, extending a pair of badly calloused hands. "I have been playing golf and living the simple life."

Mabel dieted rather strenuously to attain a proper slenderness for "The Slim Princess," a picture she recently completed for the Goldwyn Company, and as a result is not underweight and anaemic. She is drinking gallons of milk to get fat, and is weighing herself with scrupulous care to report every added ounce to her physician. Mabel never takes any care of herself, and her friends have now taken her in hand and prevailed upon her to try and keep the roses in her cheeks.

Her eyes seemed to me larger and deeper than ever.

"Look at these lashes," said Florence Reed. "You could braid them."

"Braids are out," answered Mabel. "Bobbed hair is in vogue."

Mabel never loses her good spirits; she always had an epigram, or at least an answer, on the tip of her saucy little tongue. But as one man said once in speaking of the gay little lady:

"You love Mabel not because of, but in spite of her mischievous pranks. She scatters her smiles broadcast [sic], takes everyone to her heart, and then promptly goes away, forgets all about them until she meets them by accident again."

But one feels it is a joy to know Mabel, and the world is better for having had her here.

* from *Chicago Daily News*, December 11, 1920

" Carl Sandburg

What Happened to Rosa is the latest tale that Mabel Normand depicts on the screen. Its first Chicago production has been given this week at Barbee's Loop Theater. Mabel Normand's hosts of admirers can watch the little comedy queen to their hearts' content in her newest movie, as she is in the forefront of the picture fully 99 and 44-110ths of all the time. The plot is deliciously simple and can be sketched in a few words.

A fortune teller imparts to Mayme Ladd, a humble little shop girl, the alluring and somewhat quaint "info" that she is going to turn into Rosa Alvero, a beautiful maiden, and that she will meet a handsome stranger. She does. Everybody is allowed one guess what happens to Rosa. One more guess is permitted as to who plays the twin parts of Mayme, the poor shop girl, and Rosa, the beautiful Spanish maiden.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, December 24, 1920

Mabel Normand Back

Looking like the Mabel of five years ago, Miss Normand has just returned to town from the East. She has gained about thirty pounds, due, doubtless to her recent happy rustication on that Northern New York farm, and she says that all her old clothes are a dead loss because they won't fit her anymore.

Miss Normand went out of the studio yesterday, and saw her picture, "Head Over Heels," run off. She will begin work on a new feature shortly.

* from *Pictures and Picturegoer*, December 25, 1920

• From an interview with Roscoe Arbuckle

"...Those days of the 'Fatty and Mabel' comedies were great days," remarked Fatty Arbuckle. "We hadn't much money, but we sure did see life. We used to walk to our locations, carrying our props in bags and baskets, because we couldn't afford to hire cars. So long as the light lasted we worked, never worrying about eating or anything like that. What are you smiling at? I'm telling you. It's a wonder I didn't turn into a living skeleton. But--great days--great days..."

1921

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, January 2, 1921

" Louella Parsons

Where is Mabel Normand? Up to twenty-four hours ago I should have answered at the Hotel Netherland. I supposed she was still in New York continuing her diligent search for film material and keeping on her milk diet. I saw her about three weeks ago at the New Amsterdam Theatre with Mildred Harris, and at that time she said she had no intention of leaving New York for two or three months.

But Mabel frequently changes her mind. That is why she is so charming and so lovable. People who never have a change of heart are usually stupid and monotonous. Yesterday a wire came from her from Los Angeles with a New Year greeting. When and why she departed for the West no one knows. Such a thing as getting ready to take a cross continent trip in half an hour wouldn't worry Mabel. She usually leaves on five minutes notice, we suspect, because she hates to say good-by.

* from *Picture Show* [a British publication], January 15, 1921

" Louella Parsons

Talking the Milk Cure.

That winsome young person, Mabel Normand, gave all her friends a terrible shock when she grew thinner by the hour, a few months ago. I saw her at the theatre, and was haunted by her white face, and her eyes with their deep shadows. Mabel's eyes are so big and deep, when she looks badly they seem to cover her whole face.

After meeting her, I heard she had gone to the country and was drinking gallons of milk. Then I didn't see her for weeks, until we met at the auction of Olive Thomas's things. She has put on ten pounds, and is as round and pink as when she used to make everyone laugh in her famous comedies with Fatty Arbuckle.

"I am just resting," she said, "and I refuse to make another picture until I can get a story I want, and the sort of director I need."

Mabel looked very well in a red turban, set jauntily on her pretty head, and a coat worth a king's ransom but none too good for a little lady.

* from *Photoplay*, February 1921

Mabel Normand has been taking a vacation. On an up-state farm. Only comes into Manhattan once in a while. Leading the simple life. Reason? Mabel wanted to gain ten pounds. Doesn't know when she'll come back to work. "Want a good story first," she says. She looks perter and prettier than she ever did.

* from *Los Angeles Record*, February 3, 1921

Mabel Normand Re-Engaged by Mack Sennett

After weeks of negotiations Mabel Normand has been signed up by Mack Sennett, and the Goldwyn star becomes once more the Sennett star. Under the terms of the now existing agreement, Miss Normand's services have been engaged on a long-term contract, and her first work will be as star of "Molly O," a big romantic comedy soon to be put in rehearsal at the Sennett studio. To satisfy the Goldwyn interests and entice the celebrated star to the signing of a long-term contract involved a sum of approximately \$1,000,000. It is known that this is not the first time that negotiations have been opened between Sennett and his former star, but the need of her services was never felt before so keenly as when casting of "Molly O" was undertaken. In the opinion of those that have read the finished scenario and studied the completed continuity, there was but one artist competent adequately to portray the title role. That one was Mabel Normand.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, February 6, 1921

" Louella Parsons

Seldom has a piece of news been received with such genuine interest as the wire received last week stating Mabel Normand had signed a contract with Mack Sennett. Miss Normand's first big success was made in the Sennett slapstick comedies, when the antics of Mabel was the favorite topic of conversation at the family breakfast table. There was nothing she wouldn't do, from dashing headlong into the ocean to letting an automobile pass over her. All of her tricks, combined with her good looks, made her name much more famous than the Gold Dust Twins.

While she built up a following in the Goldwyn productions, and held the affection of her followers, there was always a hope Mabel would do some more of her old-time tricks. What could be more natural than when her contract with Goldwyn expired for her to sign her name to a Sennett contract. Mack Sennett had never found any one to take Mabel's place, and his offer to star her again is most natural. Every one is waiting for the Sennett pictures in which Mabel is expected to give one of her old-time peppy performances.

* from *Motion Picture Classic*, March, 1921

The Man Who Made Mickey

by Frederick James Smith

Not only Mabel Normand's "Mickey" but that burlesque satire, "Yankee Doodle in Berlin." And the last three Dorothy Gish pictures, produced just before the comedienne went upon her recent trip. The man? Richard Jones.

Somehow or other, the spotlight of publicity has rather missed Dick Jones. Yet it is about time that film fans jotted down his name in their memory book. For Jones has just gone West to be super-comedy director for Mack Sennett with a studio all to himself and the cream of the Sennett lot-beauties and comedienness-from which to select his casts.

Jones has a \$105,000 contract to make at least three, and not more than four, features during the coming year. These are to be super-comedies; (note the word!) six reels or more in length, according to the subject requirements.

There is a picturesque and colorful story behind Dick Jones. He fought his way to success in every sense of the words. Jones was born in St. Louis. Oddly, he has been connected with motion pictures. Dick secured his first position with O.T. Crawford, who then controlled a chain of Missouri theaters and was owner of the Atlas Publishing Company. Dick's first work was connected with the filming of a Jesse James series of thrillers. He was exactly seventeen and a half years old when he made this lurid film debut. That was nine years ago.

Next, Dick drifted to the Coast and secured a position with Mack Sennett. There he remained over seven years. He started as cutter, rapidly advanced to head of his department and soon was writing and editing those subtitles so characteristic of the Sennett comedies of a few years ago. Remember them?

About this time, "Mickey" was started as a special Mabel Normandy production. One director after another began work and then failed, until a total of five had fallen down on "Mickey." Then Mr. Sennett, who had come to rely upon Dick Jones, called him to general headquarters and made him a director -- with "Mickey" as his first task.

Most young men would have feared to take a chance, but not Dick Jones. He started by throwing away everything that had been made previously. He took the scenario, but one and a quarter page in length, and wrote a brand-new story. Then he started. That "Mickey" later scored so strongly testifies to Jones' ability. "Mickey," be it known, holds the screen's comedy record as money maker.

David Griffith, meanwhile, had cast his eye upon Jones and called him East to direct Dorothy Gish.¹⁸⁰

Jones is a hard worker. He literally lives his motion picture work. He has just one hobby - yachting. While in the East, he purchased a small yacht and spent his spare time cruising around the Sound off Mamaroneck, where the Griffith studio is located, with that other sea-going member of D.W.'s forces, Harry Carr.

Jones has interesting ideas upon screen farce comedy. "I see radical changes coming very shortly," he says. "The trouble with the present-day farce lies in the fact that it is but a series of comic incidents strung together. There is no romance, no sympathetic theme running thru. Harold Lloyd's comedies have leaped into popularity because there is a sympathy-winning story revolving around Lloyd's efforts to win the girl. The same thing, more deeply characterized, won for Chaplin. There is, in a phrase, no personal interest in the average farce.

"Directors have simply endeavored to film something funny. They have not tried for heart interest. In reality, situations are infinitely more humorous if they revolve around characters in which you have a personal interest. We must have more real characters in our farces, people who aren't mere comic supplement cartoons.

"Screen farce has developed a routine set of characters. There is the huge, usually bewhiskered, man who pursues the comedian. There is the comic -- flirtative but henpecked - father of the heroine, along with the iron-jawed mother. The set includes a comic count, a burlesque parson and the usual squad of bathing girls. No imagination goes into the story.

"Other days are coming. Farces must be cleaner. Again, they must have better photography. There is no reason why a farce cannot be as beautiful in camera work as serious drama."

Jones has ideas and an alert imagination. He has youth. He has grown up with the screen. Hence, his forthcoming super-farces should be well worth watching.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, March 16, 1921

The audience at the opening of the Ambassador Theater last night represented the most brilliant angles of Los Angeles social life. Men and women of every profession, and of notable wealth, were observed throughout the house, and handsome gowns, brilliant jewels and magnificent furs gave the assemblage the aspect of the grand tier at the Metropolitan.

Among those who had reserved their seats in advance were...Tom Moore, Mabel Normand, Wallace Reid, Louise Glaum, Carmel Myers, Tom Mix, Tully Marshall, Wallace MacDonald and Doris May, William Conklin, May Allison, Jack Coogan, Lila Lee, Harry Garson, Shirley Mason, Louis B. Mayer, Wanda Hawley, William Desmond, Earl Williams, Mildred Harris, Sam Woods, Jack Warner, Charles Murray, Mack Sennett, Elinor Glyn, James Kirkwood, Al Christie, Carter de Haven, John M. Stahl, Bessie Love, Joseph De Grasse, Gloria Swanson, Harold Lloyd, Phyllis Haver, Sol Wurtzel, Charles Chaplin, Allan Dwan, Betty Compson, Al Kauffman, Hal Roach, Irving Thalberg, Katherine MacDonald, Benjamin B. Hampton, King Vidor, Naomi Childres, Anita Stewart, Mary Miles Minter and Virginia Fox.

Carl Stockdale and party, Mrs. Shelby in décolleté black net and jet, Maurice Tourneur and party, Bebe Daniels....

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, March 27, 1921

" Herbert Howe

Los Angeles -- Mabel Normand expects to commence work next week in the Sennett special, "Molly-O," under the direction of F. Richard Jones.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, April 6, 1921

" Cholly Angeleno

Another brilliant event marked the second evening of the grand opera. All the gayety and the beauty of the opening night was repeated last evening in the personnel of the audience, the dazzling beauty of the gowns and the women who wore them.

Many who attended "Othello" were present again last evening to hear Mary Garden sing her famous Carmen role.

...Antonio Moreno and Rudolpho Valentino were among the screen stars present.

...Mary Miles Minter wore a gown of silver cloth and lace and a silver bandeau in her hair.

...Miss Mabel Normand was attractive in a gown of white satin, made without any suggestion of color, and an ermine wrap.

¹⁸⁰ The Dorothy Gish films Jones did for Griffith were, as released, *Flying Pat* (1920), *The Ghost in the Garret* (1921), and *The Country Flapper* (1922).

...Eva Novak, who was with William S. Hart, was in black lace with an exquisite coat of black heavily embroidered in gold.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, April 10, 1921

" Louella Parsons

Speaking of wedding gifts, Mabel Normand gave the young Mrs. Tom Moore a beautiful (say those who have seen it) vanity case, in which was engraved, "To Rene -- in remembrance of her wedding day -- Mabel." Mabel's acquaintance with Mrs. Moore is almost of the same duration as Mr. Moore's.

* from *Photoplay*, May 1921

...And we can now present to you--Mr. and Mrs. Tom Moore.

Tom Moore and Renee Adoree met in New York New Year's Eve.

They were married in Beverly Hills, California, on February 12th.

...They were married, in the lovely drawing room of Tom Moore's home in Beverly Hills, just at noon. Nice, fat, jolly Judge Summerfield married them, and Mabel Normand was maid of honor, and Jack Pickford was best man. Dear old Mrs. Moore, mother of the Moores, was the only guest present.

...Afterwards they drove to a famous Inn in Pasadena, where a bridal breakfast was served for forty of their friends, among them May Allison, Alice Lake, Edna Purviance, Mr. and Mrs. Mahlon Hamilton, Lottie Pickford, Teddy Sampson, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Robertson, Mr. and Mrs. Cedric Gibbons, and the bridal party.

Everybody drank the bride's health--in the stuff that runs under bridges, we suppose--and they motored away in a cloud of rice, and blessings to Santa Barbara, Del Monte, San Francisco and finally took shop to Honolulu, where they spent a three weeks honeymoon.

* from *Movie Weekly*, May 14, 1921

• Concluding installment of published series of reminiscences by early silent film comedienne Flora Finch

Those early days at the Vitagraph were indeed happy ones. Many of the favorites of to-day were just beginning their picture careers in that studio in Flatbush.

Mabel Normand came just about the time I did. She was a lovable youngster always up to mischief, the perpetrator of more than one practical joke that sent everyone into paroxysms of laughter. Mabel and Lillian Walker were Damon and Pythias of comedy. One a brunette, the other a blonde. They always considered that they scored an ace when one made the other laugh at an inauspicious moment.

I remember that one day Lillian was playing in a serious scene. The director rehearsed it several times. Then, everything set, he ordered the camera to grind. For some unknown reason, Lillian turned her head. There was a squeak; she doubled up with mirth and simply shrieked. The director, raving furiously at having a perfectly good scene spoiled, turned around, but didn't see anything. Of course, he didn't. The mischief maker had disappeared. It had been Mabel, dressed in a clown costume, face white-washed, nose black, lips reddened to extend from ear to ear, penciled to slant upwards. There she had stood, grimacing and prancing about. Lillian turned around, saw this unexpected sight, and . . . pandemonium!

* from *Motion Picture Classic*, June 1921

" Hazel Shelly

The grill room of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles is rapidly becoming the Mecca for movie people. When Mr. And Mrs. Star need diversion recreation, or food, nowadays, instead of hieing themselves in their Packards to the Alexandria or Sunset Inn, they drive to the Ambassador. Not only is this Hotel de Luxe nearer their habitats, but it is twice as expensive as any other hostelry.

The other evening Ruth Roland was there tripping the light fantastic with some good-looking chap. She wore a peach-colored chiffon evening dress. Among the other dancers was Rosemary Theby in grey, and a grey picture hat, and Eileen Percy in an emerald-green chiffon frock and hat. To my mind Gloria Swanson was the most beautiful woman in the room. She was wearing a flame-colored evening gown trimmed with flame-colored sequins. Her hair was dressed in a new fashion, parted in the middle and bound close to her head. She was accompanied solely by her husband, H. K. Somborn

Another evening Mahlon Hamilton and his handsome young wife were there in a party, which included Mabel Normand and William D. Taylor.

* from *Photoplay*, June 1921

Everybody in Hollywood was at the Washington's Birthday races at the Los Angeles speedway, when Ralph dePalma cleaned up one of the most thrilling speed races ever won.

May Allison had a box -- and a box party, consisting mostly of men, as far as we could see. May always has a regular attendant group of young men -- but she agrees with Elinor Glyn that stars shouldn't marry so I guess it's quite hopeless. Her sister was acting as chaperone.

Tom and Nell Ince were there with there oldest boy, who nearly fell out of the box with excitement. I heard a dozen people speaking about how well Mrs. Ince is looking. She had on a marvelous sable coat and the smartest little blue bonnet-hat. Jackie Saunders was in their box, in a suit of blue duvetyn, with a collar of marten. Jackie certainly believes in short and convenient skirts. And she has at least two perfectly good reasons.

Mabel Normand arrived just as the race was starting, looking as fat and sassy as she did five years ago. Most of the western film colony hadn't seen her since her rest cure, and everybody had to run over and congratulate her. Characteristically, Mabel had picked up some small urchin on the way -- aged about nine -- and giving him the seat of honor, had a gorgeous time entertaining him. She had on a sport coat of blue and henna plaid and a smart straw sailor.

Mrs. Wallace Reid, whom her husband adequately described as the best looking thing around the track, entertained a box party, while her husband worked in the pits most of the day with the cameras, -- getting stuff for his new automobile picture. With Mrs. Reid were Mr. and Mrs. Bill Desmond and Hank and Dixie Johnson.

Jack Pickford, who had been seriously ill for some days, was there too, looking white and thin, wrapped in coats and robes. His sister Lottie, in a magnificent coat of velvet and fur, and Teddy Sampson, in a sport frock of blue, were with him.

Mr. and Mrs. Cecil deMille were there of course.

Tom Mix and his wife, Victoria Ford, were among those present -- Tom being very much in evidence with a plaid overcoat that must have been designed to match his bandanas. And Hoot Gibson had a bevy of pretty girls in a box next to May Allison's.

Doug Fairbanks arrived on the run when the races were about half over and watched them from the judge's stand, where Tony Moreno was having the time of his young life, rooting like a yell leader for de Palmer.

Mary Alden, with the smartest black had I've seen this year, entertained Mr. and Mrs. Rupert Hughes and some other friends.

Alice Lake wore a cape of wool with fringe and an adorable tam over her eye, and I saw Elliott Dexter, just back from a week at Catalina brown as a berry, and pretty Seena Owen, in black and coral.

And everybody went home so hoarse from cheering, they couldn't speak.

* from *Molly O* production files, Mack Sennett papers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

· from Sennett-Normand contract made and entered into July 21, 1921

main points briefly:

for term commencing 15 Sept. 1921

Miss Normand to be paid \$3000 a week

till either party decides to terminate with thirty day's notice.

* from *Variety*, July 22, 1921

Mabel Normand Going Abroad

Mabel Normand is going to Europe. She has finished "Molly O" and left for New York last week. Miss Normand is to sail in about two weeks.

Two months at least will be the time she will be away from L. A. during which time the Sennett studios will be closed. On her return she is to return to the Sennett fold.

* from *Photoplay*, August 1921

Hello Mabel!

by Adela Rogers St. Johns

Agnes Ayres and I were cozily watching the gorgeous mannequins parade peacock-wise down the long French room at a fashion show in a smart Los Angeles shop the other evening.

Suddenly a girl in a sable cape with a black taffeta poke bonnet with red roses came down the aisle in front of us.

"Oh, see that pretty girl in the black bonnet," said Agnes Ayres. "Isn't she sweet? She looks exactly like Mabel Normand used to look when I first saw her on the screen."

I nodded agreement.

Just then the girl came opposite us, and as she raised a white-gloved hand in gay greeting, we said in flabbergasted chorus, "Why-ee, Mabel!"

Because you see, it was Mabel Normand.

But we hadn't known her because she did look like the Mabel Normand of ten years ago and not at all like the Mabel we have seen for the past two or three years.

She slipped into a seat beside pretty Mrs. Mahlon Hamilton, and while I watched the lure and fascination of gowns, my eyes kept straying in her direction.

How sweet she looked! How smooth and round and girlish her face was under that adorable poke bonnet! How bright and smiling and interested her big, brown eyes as she whispered to Mrs. Hamilton! The same old Mabel.

I have a very vivid picture of the first time I ever saw Mabel Normand. It came back to me then. It was a long time ago -- all of ten years, I'm sure. It was at night, in Al Levy's restaurant -- at that time the most famous cafe in Los Angeles.

The man with whom I was dining, after suddenly putting down his fork, said in a hushed tone, "There's the prettiest girl I ever saw in my life."

I turned. She was.

A round, youthful, exquisite thing, with enormous, deep velvet brown eyes between ridiculous, exaggerated golden lashes, a skin like peach-bloom and a saucy, curling, red mouth. All in white, with her glinting red-brown curls tucked under a big white leghorn hat.

Mabel Normand -- at sixteen.

So that when I saw her about a year and a half ago just before she went to New York, it did not seem possible that she could be the same girl whose arresting prettiness had made us gasp in Al Levy's that night.

She was sitting in her car on the Goldwyn lot.

She looked ill. She looked unhappy. But more than that, she looked harassed, eaten up inside by something that was bitter to her spiritual digestion.

Smiling -- yes, but we all know that Mabel will go to meet St. Peter with a smile on her face, no matter what road she goes.

Her face was sunken so that her eyes looked uncannily large and dark. Her cheeks were the gray-white of a sea fog. Within her rich clothes she seemed wasted away, their gorgeousness hung loose about her thin frame.

She haunted me. It hurt to see her -- as it hurts to see a gorgeous, fragrant, budding Jacqueminot rose suddenly cut from a bush and flung carelessly on the ground, helpless, fading, bruised by sun and wind.

There were constant stories as to her failing health, her fading beauty. There were rumors that she was photographing very badly, and that Goldwyn -- paying her an enormous salary -- was most unhappy.

And now -- this superlative, rejuvenated, curved and sparkling Mabel.

"How did you do it?" I asked her a few days later.

We were curled on a big, soft divan before a snapping wood fire that wiped away all memory of the cold, drizzle without.

"I don't know," said Mabel smiling.

The same old Mabel. Inarticulate and shy about herself, in spite of her fun and frankness.

But gradually, as the flames died into a glowing mass, and the silent maid drew the curtains and lighted a dim lamp or two, she unconsciously drew for me the startling outlines of a picture which, with the assistance of history, I could fill in for myself.

Strangely enough, too, we talked mostly about books. Stephen Leacock -- her favorite, speaking somehow of the same desire for comedy and frivolity shown by the boy some from the front; the new Russians from whom she shuddered away as a person does who has seen reality and tragedy enough in life itself; Knut Hansen, whom she surprisingly, tenderly understood; Ibanez, to whose indirectness she could not respond.

Reading between the lines, it brought me an understanding of Mabel Normand's comeback.

Because it is a comeback.

One word -- her creed, her ideal, her philosophy-- sums up the method, the reason and the reward.

Courage.

How Mabel Normand adores courage. It is to her the supreme characteristic. Almost breathlessly she say of this woman -- of that book-character -- of such and such a hero. "What courage! What courage!"

It is her highest praise.

She has had to learn courage -- the sparkling, vivid, sixteen-year old butterfly.

The story of Mabel Normand's life -- such a short life to have packed so much between its covers -- is almost as well known as that of Mary Pickford.

In a world that watched with intensity every moment of the early motion picture stars, it was not possible that Mabel Normand should live without an audience.

To the motion picture people themselves and to a large part of the motion picture public, Mabel Normand's history is well known.

They know of her comet-like rise from complete obscurity to fame and fortune. They know of the adulation and riches and opportunities heaped instantaneously into the lap of this pretty, excitable, impulsive, big-hearted kid, who stood against this onslaught with very little either of education or tradition to help her.

The kindest mortal I have ever known. I have seen her take off an expensive new hat that she liked and give it to a cash girl that looked at it wistfully. She could not bear the sight of suffering.

Her fame, her success, her money never made any difference in Mabel. A friend was a friend. A need was a need. Never any of this, "I meet so many! What is your name?" stuff about Mabel.

Four years ago, Mabel was in a very serious automobile accident. For months her life hung in the balance. For weeks she was not expected to live.

But the doctors had failed to count on Mabel Normand's heart -- on that courage which she rates so high.

Somehow she won that fight with death. Gamely, smilingly, wide-eyed and unafraid, not particularly because she wanted to live, but because she did not think it courageous to die.

She won -- but that was the beginning of all that followed. For several years, Mabel's health -- not even then cared for as it should have been because Mabel would not care for it -- sank steadily.

And then, Mabel Normand disappeared.

The Goldwyn lot, where she was working, knew her no more.

But in the rock-ribbed hills of a New England state, in a small village and in surroundings without comforts or indulgences of any kind, a girl was beginning a real fight for life.

For six months, Mabel "rested." With that smiling courage of hers, she took up the steady, soul-grinding task of building up a wrecked nervous system, of recuperating a weak and neglected body.

She made good. She has come back. The whispers and the words have all changed now. It is -- "Doesn't Mabel Normand look wonderful?"

There is hardly a gathering in Hollywood where her return to health and beauty is not discussed. Her quiet, systematic way of living is talked of now.

Coincidentally, Mabel is back on the Mack Sennett lot where she made her first pictures, and where for years she was starred to advantage. Comedy queens and bathing beauties may come and go, but there is only one Mabel Normand. They could not replace her. So when you go over to the same old lot, and see the same old Mabel, it seems as though the hands of the clock had been turned back.

Picturesque, brilliant warm-hearted little comedienne; I don't care what they're paying her -- even the reputed \$7,800 a week -- she's worth it.

We loved her then and we love her now because she's always -- the same old Mabel.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, August 31, 1921

New York is more than having her share of stars these days. There has been a regular exodus of electric light favorites from California for the last two weeks, with the result that theatre-going these days consists in fighting the mobs to get to the lobbies. Mabel Normand is arriving on the Twentieth Century this morning. Now that she is an Associated Producers' star there is much excitement at these offices to see, face to face, the heroine of "Molly O."

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, September 1921

Worldly But Not Weary

by Willis Gold Beck

Scarlet tanagers...Coney Island...

That is, in part, the way Louise Fazenda in her Impressions in the Classic magazine described Mabel Normand. I have often questioned those impressions -- and then, meeting the subjects, have invariably found them correct. In outlining her fellow comedienne, Louise didn't fail.

There is something of the tanager about Mabel. She is flashing, impetuous, startling. There is in her moods something of the bird's vivid scarlet flight.

Of Coney Island? Yes you can readily imagine her in its gaudy packs, shooting the chutes or screaming down a perpendicular drop on a roller coaster. I don't say that she does these things, but you can easily picture her doing them. The true probability is that you'll find her more frequently in the sophisticated setting of a New York restaurant, or at the theater.

"I go to New York after every picture," she said "I cannot stand it out here in California for very long. And when I'm there I go twice a day to the theaters."

Experience has not jaded Mabel's enthusiasms. She is worldly without being weary.

We had only a brief chat at the Sennett studio in Edendale, a section of Los Angeles. There between scenes, she lured me on to talk of books. I had heard of her mad passion for Stephen Leacock -- for his writings I mean!

She plunged at once into a eulogy of his Literary Lapses, was pained that I had not read it, that I presumed to qualify the virtues of Leacock's humor. And then she was called away to make her final scene for the day.

"Meet me at the gate," she said, "and drive home with me. I'll have to take off my makeup. My dressing-room's a bungalow over there across the lot."

She ran off.

Everyone who is interested at all in pictures is watching the Sennett studio with speculative eyes. Mabel's new starring vehicle "Molly-O" is the subject of many prophecies and predictions. It is revealing no secret to say that Mabel's last big hit "Mickey," was not a Goldwyn picture, that Goldwyn was deplorably wanting in the ability to furnish her with a suitable story, or direction -- I shan't presume to say which. "Mickey" was made by Mack Sennett. It was his first radical departure toward the furtherance of his announced intention to make big comedy dramas. And "Molly-O" is even more ambitious. The seriousness with which he is going about it is evident in the fact that he has secured Lowell Sherman of "Way Down East" fame, to play the heavy and Jack Mulhall as leading man.

From the most disinterested source I could find, I learned that Mabel is photographing as she never photographed before. And certainly her appearance would seem to justify that.

In her big limousine, as we rolled across the city, she was delightful. She is small, almost plump now, with large brown eyes where wisdom lurks behind half closed lids and heavy lashes -- wisdom and good humor. Her hair is dark and thick. I had noticed in the studio that she moves easily, lightly, with the grace that bespeaks the strong body. She has a way, when speaking, of leaning toward you, so that her eyes are disturbingly near yours, immensely wide. And her mouth quirks occasionally, as though inside she was laughing at you and for the life of her couldn't keep it in. She has a comfortable way of resting her hand on yours when she laughs. Altogether the ride was extremely pleasant.

"How does it seem to be back at the Sennett studio? Well, it is so different? It is not like staring in at a new one. When I left there was only one stage. Now there are at least six. But I am quite happy. I have all the faith in the world in the story and in Richard Jones, the director."

"Have you any idea of the length of your stay with Sennett?" I asked.

"Oh it is understood that I shall be there for a number of productions. I don't know exactly how many."

She doesn't live in Hollywood. She has a small, bungalow in a residential section of the city, rarely frequented by picture people, where she lives with her secretary, her Chow dog, and her books in luxurious content.

Once we were there she plunged again into thoughts of Leacock. She tried me on several of his "Lapses," and then finding me quite hopeless, brought out Dreiser's "The Hands of the Potter."

I read the cover blurb a little dubiously. "A Tragedy. Naked. Unashamed."

"Is this what comes of your return to Sennett's?" I ventured. I don't remember her reply. She was busy, by that time, giving me a copy of "Deburau." She had some very beautiful portraits, photographs of Olive Thomas, on the table, carefully bound. She turned them over for me slowly.

"Ollie¹⁸¹ never saw these," she said.

On the baby grand piano was a striking figure in silvered metal, that of a Hawaiian surf rider tearing in on a silver wave.

"Tom, Tom Moore, and Renee Adoree brought that for me from their honeymoon," said Mabel. "They want me to put it on the radiator cap of my Stutz. They have one on their car."

I told her of an interview I had with Renee, and how Tom Moore had driven me off with strong expressions of malignancy toward interviews and interviewers, and how, later, when I had tried to get another story from him on marriage he would have nothing to do with me.

Mabel laughed.

"Yes," she said, "Tom's funny that way, but all the same he's a wonderful boy."

Perhaps that's why it's impossible to find anyone who knows her who will say a word against her ³/₄ because she's always has a good word for the other fellow.

I think I have never met a person with more instant charm, less affectation, or more generous impulse. Mabel has as much right to ennui and egotism as the best of us, yet she remains irrepressible and without pose. I can think of no better way to illustrate than by incident:

She took me downtown with her, as far as Figueroa. As we stopped there at the corner, and the chauffeur swung open the door for me, an urchin, a newsboy, stuck his head in and said,

¹⁸¹ "Ollie" refers to actress Olive Thomas, one-time mistress of Flo Ziegfeld's, and later wife to Jack Pickford. A spirited and talented actress in her own right, she had just recently died in Paris as a result of swallowing mercury bichloride. It remains a mystery to this day whether her death was accident, suicide, or murder. Afterward, it was *rumored* that she had been known to use cocaine, and also that Mabel was one of her associates in drug taking.

"Hello, Mabel!" There was a hint of annoyance in Mabel's reply. She knew him!
 "Hello there!" she answered. "How's the other boy, the lame one?"
 "Oh, he's carryin' one o' them leather things out on the golf course, what they put there sticks in. makin' two dollars a day. He's all right."
 Mabel gave him a dollar.
 I learned later, from someone else, that Mabel had taken him to the auto races out at the Speedway. Sitting there, munching peanuts, the kid had spied Wally Reid and a couple of other familiar faces.
 "Gee!" he cried. "Look out the movie stars!"
 "Yea," said Mabel in return. "Ain't they funny!" -- and went right on eating peanuts!
 I fear I have resorted to wild tactics to describe Mabel accurately, as she appeared to me. Scarlet tanagers...Coney Island...Lame newsboys...Theodore Dreiser. It's a strange melange. But, if you have understood that Mabel is some girl, it'll do!

* from *Photoplay*, September 1921

The biggest party of the movie social season was that with which Mabel Normand entertained at the Ambassador Hotel when the new Cocoanut Grove was opened there this month.

Miss Normand, who lives in apartments, declared she wanted to repay all the people with homes who had been so nice to her, and she invited fifty guests to an elaborate dinner party, and dancing in the Grove afterwards.

Everybody was there really, -- I saw Mr. and Mrs. Mahlon Hamilton, the latter in a cerise gauze that set off her dark beauty, Edna Purviance, in white, Jack Pickford and beautiful Rubye de Remer -- who by the way is putting on some weight that is very becoming to her, in the southern California sunshine -- Roscoe Arbuckle, Bebe Daniels, Jim Kirkwood, Viola Dana in a soft lavender creation -- and hosts of others.

Mabel herself was as brilliant as a butterfly -- and by the way, she tells me she's so healthy she's reducing.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, September 2, 1921

" Grace Kingsley

From Cocoanut Jungle...Mabel Normand has caught a distinguished looking one with gray hair this time! Oh, and they say she has a whole bag of engagement rings ---¹⁸²

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, September 4, 1921

" Frances Agnew

Los Angeles, Aug. 29 -- According to present plans Mabel Normand will commence work on another special production for Mack Sennett on September 15. She recently completed "Molly-O," her first feature since returning to Sennett soil, and is now on her way to New York for a vacation.

Incidentally it is reported that Mabel Normand is receiving around \$8,000 a week for her services. If this is true she may be rated as the highest salaried star now employed in the Hollywood fields, although some of the "independents" may lay claim to higher incomes based on the percentages they get from pictures.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, September 4, 1921

" Louella Parsons

Said a press agent who called at this office:

"I came to tell you all about Miss Mabel Normand."

"That is very kind of you," I said, "What is it you think I should know?"

"Miss Normand," he went on, looking heavenward, "is interested in theosophy, and is spending her time delving into the books on this beautiful cult. She has made a thorough study of the subject and has been greatly absorbed in the Hindu ideas."

Now, we wonder if Mabel herself knows about this. We thought we ought to call her up at the Ritz-Carlton and enlighten her. And speaking of the one and only Mabel. She looks like she did when Mack Sennett first starred her in the famous Keystone comedies. She is plump, fresh looking and exactly as pretty as she was before she had her breakdown. Mabel has come back. What a marvelous thing it is to have her as she was before she was so ill. Every one loves Mabel and it was probably some of these good thoughts that helped restore her.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, September 11, 1921

From the manner in which Nazimova's modernized "Camille" held the attention of the audience which viewed it, for the first time, in the ballroom of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, New York, the evening of Wednesday, September 7; from the applause the picture evoked and from outspoken commendation of it by professional personages there, Metro officials believe that in the screen version of the great Dumas play it has one of the most powerful box office attractions ever produced...

Nazimova was present in person at the showing, as also were Rudolph Valentino, who played Armand, and Natacha Rambova, who designed the settings. Following the exhibition there was a reception in the Crystal Room.

The production was directed by Ray C. Smallwood and the scenario written by June Mathis.

The photoplay was viewed by an audience whose composite photograph might have been entitled "A Celebrity."

Among the guests were...Miss Lillian Gish, Miss Dorothy Gish, Miss Norma Talmadge, Miss Constance Talmadge, Joseph M. Schenck, Richard Barthelmess, Adolph Zukor, D. W. Griffith, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Mabel Normand...

¹⁸² Bruce Long: "'Cocoanut Jungle' refers to gossip from the Coconut Grove in the Ambassador Hotel. The 'distinguished looking one with gray hair' is certainly [William Desmond] Taylor."

* from *New York Journal*, September 14, 1921

Mrs. Minta Durfee Arbuckle, wife of Roscoe Arbuckle, film comedian, under arrest in San Francisco in connection with the death of Miss Virginia Rappe, is well on her way today to join her husband on the coast. Before leaving she reiterated her belief in her husband's innocence...

Miss Durfee, or Mrs. Arbuckle, as she prefers to be known, was in the apartment of her sister, Mrs. H. D. McLean, of No. 316 West Ninety Seventh Street, prior to the five-day journey which will take her to the San Francisco jail in which "Fatty" is locked up charged with murder...

Mabel Normand, motion picture actress, who is stopping at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, was one who telephoned Mrs. Arbuckle, expressing sympathy...

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, September 18, 1921

All the leading film lights in New York were present on Thursday night at the Apollo Theatre when "Little Lord Fauntleroy" made its bow to the public. A casual eye swept over the audience during the intermission revealed such well-known people as Norma Talmadge, Constance Talmadge, Mrs. Margaret Talmadge, Samuel Goldwyn, Joseph Schenck, Dorothy Gish, Edgar Selwyn, Mabel Normand, Marshall Neilan, Anita Loos, John Emerson, Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Williams, Albert Parker, Hiram Abrams, Nathan Burkan, Dennis O'Brien, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Grey, Mae Murray, Robert Leonard, and, of course, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Douglas, Jr., Jack Pickford and Mrs. Charlotte Pickford.

* from *Photoplay*, October 1921

" Adela Rogers St. Johns

Hollywood has been literally overrun with swimming parties this hot month. Everybody who has a swimming pool--and numerous screen celebrities have--is enjoying it themselves and inviting their friends to do likewise.

Wally Reid's hillside estate sports a very grand pool, with a walled-in sand pile, completely shut in from the road and Mrs. Reid--who was pretty Dorothy Davenport--is found in it about eight hours out of every twenty-four. The other afternoon she and Wally were joined by pretty Wanda Hawley--who looks very nice indeed in a blue one piece affair, which she fills with curving completeness--Mabel Normand, and was there every anybody before or since who could look like Mabel in one of those Italian silk suits of unrelieved black--T. Roy Barnes, and his wife Bessie Crawford, Bill Hart, May Allison, who is just learning to swim and does it with fascinating timidity amid prolific masculine instruction--and wears a modest, taffeta bathing dress that looks very French and ties in the back. Not to mention young Bill Reid, who at the age of four has learned to swim under water like an enlarged minnow, but can't swim if his nose gets above water.

* from *Pantomime*, October 12, 1921

The Diaries of Mabel Normand

by Herbert Howe

I was tempted to call this revelation The Soul of a Lady Laid Bare, but I was afraid you would think it a story about a Sennett bathing beauty instead of the only Sennett star who doesn't bathe -- that is, in public.

The good Censors forbid that I should make any revelation about bathing girls. The little ladies themselves have kept nothing from the public.

Anyhow the Sennett studio has gone dry -- by order of censors, I presume. Even water is under the ban. Of course, we must admit that the aqua pure coming from the Sennett studio did contain a kick -- say 102%. So the tanks have been drained and the polly wogs stranded high and dry.

Also Mabel "Mickey" Normand has come back -- as "Molly O."

Mabel Normand is to the screen what Ring Lardner is to literature. She's a syncopated classic.

No doubt you have your own ideas about Mabel's personality. She may represent to you the joy-of-living; the will-to-raise- merry-hell, Epernay without a morning after.

But perhaps you have forgotten, even as I, that famous humorists are usually melancholy. Mark Twain was, and George Ade says there are others.

I never would have guessed it of Mabel, however, if I hadn't discovered her diaries. No star has a greater following of personal friends than Mabel. I venture to say she would win any popularity contest staged in the film colony. I firmly believe that Poe's "Bells, bells, bells, bells" was inspired by her telephone.

The wild bells were ringing when I entered her dressing room. During the ten minutes that I awaited her coming from the "set" I pranced between the telephone and the door, answering the Sunday calls. The studio watchman called to leave a little nosegay of geraniums which he brings each day to his adored Mabel. A woman called to get a hat which Mabel promised her. Six people telephoned to say they had heard of a party which she was giving at the Ambassador hotel. And that they would like to come.

My voice was growing hoarse and my ears a bit buzzy, when Mabel (herself) pranced in wearing a hat that looked like a small pie, from which five cherries were making their escape, and a smart suit that must have been a real antique unearthed by the Garbage Excavators.

I delivered the phone messages. It took five solid minutes.

"Didn't anyone else call?" asked Mabel.

Revived by coca cola and a piece of pie, which I strongly suspected came from the comedy prop room, I commenced examining the books on the table, while Mabel took her place at the 'phone.

I found such frivolous literature as Freud's "Interpretation of Dreams;" Nietzsche's "Thus Spake Zarathustra;" George Moore's "Memoirs of My Dead Life;" Knut Hamsun's "The Growth of the Soil;" Maurice Level's "Tales of Mystery and Horror;" Andreya's "The Seven That Were Hanged" and other mirth provokers.

"Have you read Dreiser's 'The Hand of the Potter?'" queried Mabel from the telephone. Had I read Huxner's "Painted Veils," Stephen Leacock's latest, George Jean Nathan's "Book Without a Name," Hamsun's "Hunger" -- ???

"No, No, No, No, No" -- and each time I said it, she made an entry in a little notebook. There I discovered Mabel's diaries. She had a complete library of them.

"I got the habit from Frances Marion, the scenarioist," she said, "I make notes all the time -- about everything."

Mabel is a chronic fan. She sees on the average of five pictures a week. She criticizes her own. She does the same with other star's pictures. When she gets an idea for a good bit of screen business, down it goes. When she hears of a new book of interest, another entry. Appointments, Birthdays, Impressions, Addresses, Telephone numbers. Promises. All tumble into file. When she is reading a book she copies lines and phrases. At night she sets down rambling impressions and plans for the morrow.

"I hate people who forget," said Mabel, "especially forget what they read."

I'd just perspiringly admitted that I couldn't remember anything further in Virgil's Aeneid than "Armo virumque Cano."

"So I make notes of everything," continued the unforgetting Normand.

I took my life in my hands, and dared a question.

"How many boys do you hire to carry the notebooks for you?" I asked.

Mabel withered me with a glance.

"Fresh," she said.

I believe she was just a wee bit angry.

But she didn't stay that way long. She can't -- ever. I abased myself for two minutes and then out came the Normand smile again.

I thought it a good time to leave -- and did.

Two days after my interview I received a copy of Dreiser's "The Hands of the Potter," Maurice Level's "Tales of Mystery and Horror," Stephen Leacock's "Literary Lapses" and a portrait with the friendly autograph of Mabel Normand.

I take off my hat to The Girl Who Never Forgets!

Long may she keep diaries!

* from *Movie Weekly*, October 15, 1921

Mabel Revels in New York

Mabel Normand is making the most of her vacation in New York, a vacation by the way, which even at this writing is drawing to a rapid end. After working for months on her big Sennett special, "Molly O," an absence from the realm of the Kliegs isn't "so worse."

Incidentally, Miss Normand expresses an interest in the idea of making pictures here in the East. "But not as I made them for Goldwyn," she pointed out. "Right here in New York. No traveling over a ferry [to Fort Lee, New Jersey] and endless miles before getting to the studio!"

Ye ramblers wanted to know if the vivacious Mabel intended returning to two reelers, but she denied such an intention most emphatically.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, October 20, 1921

Everything was all set for the arrival of Mabel Normand, who has been East since the completion of her recent picture For Associated First National "Molly O." Camera men and press agents were at the station. Mack Sennett studio sent a delegation with flowers and when it was just about the time for the sprightly star to arrive a wire came instead announcing her delay for one day -- which means that she comes today instead.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, October 21, 1921

Mabel Normand Evades Greeters

Mabel Normand certainly had a penchant for avoiding crowds. When the California limited pulled into Los Angeles yesterday, the friends of the Sennett star were on hand to ask her all about little old New York and to extend many glad hands. The scene was all set -- but where was Mabel? She had calmly stepped of the train at San Bernadino and was motoring to town. Mabel doesn't reserve all her tricks for her pictures.

At any rate, she is home at last after her extended Eastern trip of fourteen trunkfuls of new gowns and worlds of energy in beginning work on another Mack Sennett production to follow "Molly O," which will shortly receive a national release.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 1921

Mabel Normand Plans

Will Go Abroad To Make Film Next Year

By Grace Kingsley

Following the making of two more pictures on the Mack Sennett lot, Mabel Normand will go to Spain, according to her statement made Thursday evening, on the occasion of the private showing of her latest picture, "Molly-O."

Miss Normand declares she has long had her heart set on a trip to Europe, and that she would have gone this fall, but that it was necessary, according to her contract with Mack Sennett, that she return at once to California.

"I cried when I told Douglas and Mary good-bye, and I cried again when I said good-bye to Charlie Chaplin," said Miss Normand, "and I'm determined to go abroad within the next few months. I want particularly to make a picture in Spain."

* from *Movie Weekly*, November 5, 1921

A Chummy Little Chat With Mabel Normand

By Beverly Crane

Miss Normand -- gee, that sounds funny, even on the typewriter -- Mabel -- is as unpredictable as these sudden little spring showers that come when you're wearing your new spring hat for the first time.

A whole lot nicer, though.

We called early. It was a quarter to ten, at a time when most bankers, celebrities and movie stars are in the middle of their second pleasant dream. Not so the little comedienne.

She was a minute late, and apologized for it.

"It's very early," we condoned her delay, "for an interview."

"Was it too early for you?" asked Mabel quite innocently, opening her big brown eyes.

The little Sennett star had just completed her big new picture, "Molly-O" which all fans are eagerly looking forward. Mabel was spending just a short time in New York, and enjoying it in the happy, light-hearted way she enjoys life.

She isn't a hoyden off screen at all. She's a small slight little person with a very erect and proper walk, but there's nothing very precise about Mabel herself. When we interviewed her, she had on a soft pink negligee, and her thick dark brown hair was hanging in heavy curls about her shoulders.

Presently it got too hot, so she ducked her head and gathered all her curls together in a quick feminine movement. These to our delighted amusement she screwed back in a tight little Mamma Katzenjammer knot on the top of her head, but the amazing part was that she still looked cute.

She looked very, very cute indeed, sitting there curled up in a big chair, her chin on her knees, her arms hugging her knees.

"What did you say your name was? Where do you come from? What do you do? Do you like doing it?" She reversed the order of things by plying us with questions.

She isn't the sort of person that treats an interviewer as just an interviewer. She doesn't just take you, mentally, into a cool anti-room and chat formally for half an hour and then wish you good-bye. Rather, so to speak, she opens up the doors of her heart, invites you into her comfiest living room, stuffs cushions under you and offers to tell you a good joke she heard to-day.

People to Mabel aren't just ships that pass in the night. Each singular person that crosses her threshold is an individual and Mabel slaps you on the back, says hail fellow well met and proceeds to chat chummily all about you as well as herself.

"I've been awful busy in New York," rattled Mabel hugging her knees and chattering in the naive delightful way that people who never quite grow up do talk. "My goodness! One thing after another, calls, business photographs to be taken -- but it's fun. People are so nice to me. Last week somebody phoned me to come see some shoes they're naming the 'Molly-O' shoes. Then somebody else wanted me to see some 'Molly-O' silk. And yesterday I was down at a Fifth Avenue firm to see a 'Molly-O' dress. Such a duck, too! Want to see it?"

Before we had time to protest at her losing that comfortable attitude the little pink mules went slapping, the pink negligee billowed out, and Mabel was sallying out of the room, calling comments all the way until she got back.

The dress was green, all soft, emerald color with a sheen like the sea at its deepest, and softened and graced by a rippling overskirt of black lace. Big crushed roses of dark blue and green bordered the hem and sleeves.

Down went all this gorgeousness on the floor while Mabel stood admiring it from above.

"Isn't it darling?" she bubbled.

"Lovely," we enthused, thinking how well it would set off her big dark eyes and the reddish tints in her hair.

"Got another pretty dress," volunteered Mabel, and again went pattering out of the room to reappear with a rich cerise dinner dress that left us gaping in admiration.

Then she got out a kodak book to show us some "stills" of herself. Lots of these were in the character of little ragamuffin that she does so adorably with her mixture of pathos and humor.

"You like these parts, don't you," we questioned.

Mabel nodded enthusiastically.

"This is a nice one," she offered, "this is from 'Molly-O.' I started out as a sort of Peg O' My Heart forsaken little vagrant and end all lovely and fine in beautiful silk dresses. That's the sort of parts I like most."

We steered the conversation a few years back to Mabel's tomboyhood, and got her to reminiscing.

"Yes, I've always gotten into scrapes," she admitted dolefully. "Guess I was born that way. Why, I remember when I was a little bit of a fellow I used to go calling with my mother, and I always passionately admired these waxed flowers they kept under glass cases in houses where someone had died. I had an obsession to get hold of one of those flowers. All the time I was sitting in a corner looking so quiet and serious I was planning how to get one of them. Finally one day I went to a house and while the ladies were chatting I reached out and very furtively raised the cover.

"But I was ill-fated. The cover fell to the floor with a smash, bang! and the ladies came running. Of course I was a bad, naughty child, and I was severely punished.

"Another time I remember being in disgrace was when I accidentally dropped a quarter in a contribution box at church, instead of the nickel I had intended. You can imagine my consternation! I was in a very strict Catholic school, where it was hard to get money. When I perceived my mistake, I was frantic, but I didn't let it go by, oh no! I began rummaging wildly in the contribution box. The man who held the box was scandalized. Dollar bills flew, nickels and dimes spilled out-while I rooted about like a little dog looking for the bone he had buried --

"My eye!" giggled Mabel reminiscently, "didn't I get it good for that!"

"I had a great passion in my younger girlhood," she admitted like one unearthing the family skeleton, "for tan shoes. The tanner they were the better I liked them. When I felt the swellest was when I had on a pair of shiny, sunset yellow shoes--"

"Still like them?" we asked amusedly.

"Nope, I've outgrown those," admitted Mabel. "I guess, tho," she added with a mischievous twinkle, "there are some things worse that I haven't outgrown yet."

Don't do it Mabel!

* from *Los Angeles Record*, November 12, 1921

In spite of the fact that November 10 is known to Mabel Normand and her intimates, as her birthday, it made little difference to that young lady when she arose to greet the day that meant the beginning of a new year in her life. She received and accepted an invitation from her producer, Mack Sennett, to take dinner with him and a friend, at his home. The hour was set for 7 and as usual Mabel was on time.

As Mr. Sennett escorted Miss Normand to the dining room, which was darkened to that time, the lights were turned on and eleven of Mabel's friends rushed her to wish many happy returns of the day.

A beautiful three-piece silver tea set was the gift of the entire company. Many less pretentious gifts were presented from the people who worked with her on the last picture, "Molly O," including an alarm clock from her director, Dick Jones.

Those who helped toward making the party a complete success, were Mabel Normand, William D. Taylor, Mrs. Catherine Sennett, Fay Borden, Mack Sennett, Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Asher, Dick Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Mueller and John Grey.

* from *Chicago Daily News*, November 16, 1921

" Carl Sandburg

The latest Mack Sennett offering, *Molly O'*, showing at the Chicago Theater in its first run this week, is a pleasant surprise.

Always there is rough stuff in a Sennett production. Also he is known as the specialist in "bathing beauties" and beach lights of a various order. A sort of acknowledged kingpin of knockabout travesty an up-and-at-'em burlesques.

Yet now in *Molly O'* we have something else. This production more nearly rivals Charlie Chaplin's *The Kid* than anything else on the screen this year. On top of the rough stuff and the horseplay and leaving aside certain things put in because they must be there because audiences demand them there, the points that artists call inspiration, taste, subtlety, character, are here.

It is spun out a reel or two longer than it ought to go. The end of it should come with the flash of the marriage scene. They didn't know when to stop. But what they give us before the point where they ought to have stopped has such a masterly handling of the elements that go to make a first rate photoplay that we forgive 'am and thank 'em.

When this reviewer volunteers to Ben Hecht the above information about what a movie *Molly O'* is, the Thousand Afternoons replied saying, "When I talked with Sennett at the Congress Hotel last summer, he said there is one great subject always successful in stories, stage plays and picture dramas. And that is the story of the poor girl who rises to good luck and meets her hero.

That is the theme worked out in *Molly O'*. It is a little too romantic to be called strictly honest as regards real life. Yet it is so rigorously direct and true in its handling of working class life, people, character, and so large a part of the picture deals in the latter material, that the result is the Knitting together of strands making an exceptional and a great production.

Writers like Frank Norris and Jack London would have said that for all its shortcomings it has some fine worthwhile points, and is precisely the type of a picture drama that should command wide attention because of its material and its way of handling that material.

Mabel Normand plays Molly. We wonder if it can be Mack Sennett, the violent, the splashy and brash, who is responsible for a love scene by the door where Molly's head, hair, arm, are employed in simple gestures of story telling. At moments we see only four fingers holding to a door. Well worked out business.

And once Molly, the pipe-fitter's daughter, goes to the home of rich folk. In the kitchen she puts a few dozen cakes fresh from the oven in her umbrella. Later she is ushered out to the street where it is raining. Certain scornful folk are watching her. She raises her umbrella. The cakes from the oven spill on her shoulders. She drifts proudly out into the rain.

* from *Movie Weekly*, November 19, 1921

" Maurice Costello¹⁸³

"**The Three Tomboys**"

Mabel Normand came to play bits for Vitagraph from the old Biograph company, as did Lottie Pickford. Mabel, Lottie, and Lillian Walker were three tomboy pals who were always up to some sort of mischief. When you wanted them for a scene you would be sure to find them up a cherry tree in a nearby orchard throwing twigs at each other and cutting up for all their worth.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 20, 1921

" Frances Agnew

Everybody who was invited -- which meant almost everybody in the blue book of the Coast film colony -- donned their best evening togs, ordered the chauffeur drove their own or rented an auto and plunged into the jam for the formal opening of Marcus Loew's new State Theatre here Saturday night. It was a big night for Mr. Loew and the film stars. The thousands of "fans" who kept the Los Angeles police busy while they stormed the theater and lined up on the streets to see the celebrities arrive and depart will bear witness to this fact.

This new State Theatre is the principal part of an imposing new office building on the corner of Seventh Street and Broadway. The Theatre is a beautiful one, equipped with all the luxury and convenience of the modern playhouse.

In one of the boxes sat Governor Stephens and his party and in the other Mayor Cryer with a group of his friends. Both executives spoke while arc lights played on their faces and the cameras recorded them in action, both

¹⁸³ Costello was a handsome and at one time popular leading man whom Mabel appeared with when at Vitagraph. He was also the father of actresses Dolores and Hellene Costello, both of whom were child stars in the early teens.

lauding Mr. Loew for his achievement and proving good press agents for him by urging interest in this new theatre. Mr. Loew himself made a brief speech, after being introduced by Bert Lytell, while the ever-dependable and always entertaining master of ceremonies, Fred Niblo, again did the honors for the clever showman.

The few who paid money for the opening performance undoubtedly got their money's worth, though we have no doubt that they shared the wish of the invited guests that the regular vaudeville program had been eliminated, leaving the field to the notable speechmakers and to the stars who appeared and performed.

The booking wheel unfortunately brought six very mediocre acts to the house for the week and the orchestra was in a much too serious mood when they selected the opening performance numbers. So withal the occasion would have been for the stars. We have no doubt that no one ever appreciated the magnetism of the cinema spotlight and the versatility of some of the stars better than did Mr. Loew that night when they put the "punch" into his opening show along about midnight. In fact, they gave it such a "punch" that there was no time left for the best feature of the regular program provided for the week, the Bert Lytell picture, "A Trip to Paradise."

Buster Keaton was the headliner of the evening with his eccentric dance, labeled "The Death of Salome," with a travesty on "The Great Moment," and due apologies to Elinor Glyn, finishing it. Ruth Roland pleased with two songs, one yodeled. And other who acted out were T. Roy Barnes, Walter Hires, Robert Edson and Snitz Edwards, who put on a highly amusing ventriloquist act; Ora Carew, Buck Jones, Larry Semon and Al St. John.

In the stellar rows were Anita Stewart, Rudolph Cameron, Enid Bennett, May Allison, Robert Ellis, Bert Lytell, Bayard Vellier, Viola Dana, Alice Lake, Rex Ingram, Alice Terry, Garthe Hughes, Rudolph Valentino, Doris May, Irene Rich, Bebe Daniels, Wanda Hawley, Constance Binney, Nazimova, Jackie Coogan, Gloria Swanson, Dustin Farnum, Thomas H. Ince, Sid Grauman, Constance Talmadge, Natalie Talmadge Keaton, Sylvia Breamer, Madge Bellamy, Leah Baird, King Vidor, John Bowers, Ethel Clayton, Betty Compson, June Mathis, James Young, Antonio Moreno, William Duncan, Jack Gilbert, May Collins, Mary Thurman, Mabel Normand, Harold Lloyd, Mr. and Mrs. Carter de Haven and so on and so on through a longer list than we could ever remember at one sitting.

It is doubtful if any event here ever drew out more celebrities than did Mr. Lowe's opening. Certainly his theatre has had an auspicious and history-making beginning. Here's to its success!

* from *New York Times*, November 21, 1921

Mack Sennett's latest production, "Molly O," which opened at the Central Theatre Saturday evening gives evidence, at least, that Mr. Sennett has the courage of his convictions. Apparently he believes that a profitable part of the public like good old-fashioned hokum and high jinks, so hokum and high jinks it is, without pretense of anything else. And this is better than the vain pretentiousness of many photoplays not a bit better born in the celluloid world.

Anything and everything that may bear a broad label as funny, thrilling and sentimental has been poured into "Molly O," and maybe many people will like all or most of it. And there's this much to be said, too -- in the general mixture there are a number of genuinely comic touches due chiefly to the pantomime of Mabel Normand, who is at her best when clowning, and the expert direction of F. Richard Jones.

But really, wouldn't even those who like a lot, rather than a little of this stuff enjoy "Molly O" more if there wasn't quite so much of it?

* from *Variety*, November 25, 1921

MOLLY O

A production that can be exploited into a box office attraction by the exhibitor. Not a whale of a picture, but one strong enough to permit of a campaign that will compel audiences to step up to the box office.

Mack Sennett is the producer and the picture has Mabel Normand, of "Mickey" fame, as the star. Sennett was also the producer of "Mickey," and it was a long while before that production got under way, for none of the regular releasing organizations of the time would take it, but finally when it slipped over as a states rights production it proved a veritable clean-up for those who took a chance.

"Molly O" was originally made for Associated Producers, but with the amalgamation of that organization and First National the latter stipulated that they were to have the right to accept or reject whatever they wished of the A.P.-made productions. They exercise the right to take "Molly O," and therefore it is being marketed as a First National picture.

It is on Broadway for a special run of four weeks at the Central theatre. The reason for that may be that the Strand, which is the First National franchise house, decided not to run the picture, or perhaps it may run after the Broadway run has created a vogue of it. This seems rather doubtful, because the Central is only a stone's throw from the Strand and the most direct opposition to the big house.

The picture seems to have been chopped all to pieces as far as the last 1,500 feet are concerned. The fore part of the story is one of those sweet little Cinderella tales, somewhat of the "Irene" type, that is ended when the hero marries the little heroine, but in addition to this a couple of thousand feet have been tacked on that are totally unneeded.

It carries the story along after the marriage of the girl and the wealthy hero, and it is clipped in sections with the titles carrying the yarn. Incidentally that titling reflects credit on John Gray.

"Molly O" has the name role played by Mabel Normand, who is the daughter of a Tad family in a big town. Her dad is a day laborer, ma takes in washing to help along the cause, and Jim Smith has been picked to be Molly's hubby. He is a husky who works in the same ditch with dad. Molly, however, has other ideas, and she manages to capture the wealthiest young bachelor in town. He is a doctor and they meet in a tenement where there is an infant ill. He takes her home in his car, and a few Sunday's later they meet in church. He again takes her home and stays to Sunday dinner. Yes, a regular boiled one!

After it is all over, dad tells the wealthy young doc that he has been trying to raise a respectable family and that he'll be just as well satisfied if the doc will forget the address.

But the church is giving a charity ball, and Molly steps in at the proper moment to lead the march with the young Prince (who is the doc) in place of the girl he is engaged to. The latter, who has been out on the balcony spooning with her real love and has missed the cue for the march, breaks off the engagement then and there, and Molly

O steps right in. But when she gets home that night dad is waiting for her with a strap and turns her out. She then turns to the doc, who marries her that night.

That logically should have been the finish of the picture, but the producer thought a few thrills were needed, and he padded out a few airship scenes and a couple of country club bits and little things like that. They weren't necessary at all, but they place the picture in the class of the big Drury Lane mellers, and as such will help the box office angle in the factory and tenement neighborhoods.

For the big houses it will be entertaining at that, for Mabel Normand does manage to get to the audience, for the role in the first part of the picture has lost none of the charm that the Cinderella theme ever has had.

F. Richard Jones, who directed "Mickey," is likewise responsible for "Molly O." There is nothing to rave about in direction in this picture and the photography hasn't a chance for medals, but the picture will get patronage. [Fred.]

* from *Albany NY Times Union*, November 25, 1921

MOLLY-O

by James W. Dean

Mabel Normand's latest picture, Molly-O is one of the finest comedies that ever graced the silver screen.

Only an illogical ending that lies entirely without the precinct of the story plot robs it of being the greatest comedy of the year, a greater work of art than Chaplin's "The Kid." And that's saying considerable....

...That incident should have ended the play. Many stirred from their seats thinking it was the end. But no! A thrill must be injected. A villain carries Molly-O away in a dirigible and the hero follows in an airplane and recaptures her.

This artificial episode robbed a fine picture of its sincerity. It ruined the reaction upon the audience.

Mabel Normand's Art

Mabel Normand ranks closer to Chaplin than any male comic artist. She has a little walk all her own, mannerisms of expression that are individually hers.

Her features are plastic. Pathos sweeps across her face like a cloud shadow sweeps across the water on a sunny day.

Her every gesture means something. Her acting is realism caught by the camera and projected across the screen.

And more than all, Mabel Normand is of high intelligence. The conformation [sic] of her head and face bespeak that. If thoughts can be photographed, that result is achieved when her eyes are registered on the camera's film.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, November 27, 1921

Ritz People Are Out

By Edwin Schallert.

"You see, I don't like Ritz people. You know what I mean. And as for people in general I either like them or I don't. If I do, I can act like I like them. And if I don't -- well, I can't bother about them --"

Mabel Normand was I felt, defining herself. I was conscious also that it would be highly unsatisfactory to be classed among the Ritz people -- if you know what she means by that. It's easy if you know New York, which is Mabel Normand's second home. The nearest equivalent is "full of airs."

I was keenly alive to the fact that a democratic spirit was speaking. Aware of it, through a haze of wandering blue-light cigarette smoke. Observant also that the shaking of a mass of black curls, as Miss Normand spoke, lent emphasis to her declaration of independence.

You see, she was dressed for the part at the moment she made the remark. (or was she?) Anyway she was garbed in trousers, a black velvet jacket, and wore a sombrero with a sort of mantilla beneath it that made her picturesquely eloquent. The cigarette which she held in her fingers was -- if not the crowning -- at least the "sceptering" touch for the picture she made. She looked as if she might have walked out of a page of history -- just what page I did not care particularly to know. Somehow, though, you felt a sort of splendid lawlessness about her whole democratic attitude.

This all transpired last week at the Sennett studios, where Miss Normand is working on the picture that immediately follows "Molly-O." It bears the title of "Suzanna," and is laid in that period of California history exploited somewhat by Douglas Fairbanks in "Mark of Zorro."

It's going to be a new departure for Miss Normand, and she is greatly taken with the idea of a costume film of early California. Many of the natural backgrounds in the state will probably be utilized, and there is also a chance that the company will go on location in Mexico City.

"I certainly hope they do," said Miss Normand. "You bet, I'll come down every morning and be made up to go on location in Mexico at 9 o'clock. Now don't think I'm a dumb-bell because I said that, for I'm only joking."

You know, Miss Normand has a patter all her own. She uses dumbbell with a resounding effect when she wants to tell what a perfect boob anyone is. And she fastens the anathema of Ritz on personages, in a way that would make their hair curl if they overheard her. Her slang is glorious because of its absolute freedom from constraint.

Yet that Mabel Normand is but a part of the real Mabel Normand. There is also the student of plays and of music, and of books, the girl whose life is her work, whose ambition soars miles high, yet who always remains so democratic that she doesn't hesitate to "borrow a light" from a prop boy and to call him by his first name, and allow him to call her by hers.

"I don't believe in all this bally-hoo stuff about art," she remarked. "You know what I mean. This saying that I am thus and so and so, and when I was in London I met so and so, and oh-er-ah my art, my art, my art!"

"If a person is a real artist he doesn't care to talk about it. He's too sensitive about it to let it really be known. Art makes people sensitive, the greatest thoughts you feel you can only express through your art, and you have less to say outside of your art all the time about your art."

A rather keen defining of the artist that for a girl who loves to fling slang words at the astonished hearer, and who is the life of a party through her capricious gayety.

I again felt that in a way Mabel was defining herself. You would have too, had you seen her at the moment. For about her personality there was the momentary suggestion of the dreamer, and perhaps -- who knows -- a certain reflection of the aura, of genius, that flickered and was gone.

Mayhap, you will glimpse it as I did in "Molly-O," when you see this on the screen this week. Doubtless, too, you will behold in this picture that strange combination of the pathetic and the comic which makes Miss Normand an altogether singular type among actresses in the films, and which give her a certain kinship, in a way to Charlie Chaplin.

"Molly-O" is considered the best opportunity afforded Mabel to be herself since "Mickey." It will mark her return to the screen as a Sennett star; it will also show her in a story that is built around her personality. How well you like the story will perhaps make little difference in how you will feel toward seeing Mabel herself in a role that comes closer to her type than any other in which she has appeared of late.

Personally, I believe that it will take more than one picture or two pictures to discover the greater Mabel Normand, whose personality and whose art have too often been concealed.

* from *New York Tribune*, November 27, 1921

Acting as an Aid to Development of the Character

Mabel Normand, whose picture, "Molly O'," now running at the Central Theater provides the pretty screen star with a characterization far out of line with the custard pie comedy with which she was so long associated, has evolved a very pretty philosophy in regard to acting and its influence upon the character. Miss Normand thinks that every one should have a certain amount of acting to do, even if it is only amateur theatricals or school and college plays, as a means of character development and of eliminating undesirable tendencies, as well as of creating higher ideals.

"The contacts of everyday life," says Miss Normand, "give so few definite helps for growth. Acting is a definite help; it widens experience and stimulates imagination. More important still, it furnishes an outlet for all latent tendencies. For years I had to content myself with parts of the burlesque sort. Laughter and the ridiculous were my only outlets, and all the while I was longing to be something different, to show another side of my nature. I loved my work in 'Mickey' but even that left something within me unsatisfied, my love of romance. At last, when I had despaired of ever being able to show the public this romantic bent in my nature, came 'Molly O', and besides the pleasure of revealing this other side of my character I feel that my experience in this picture actually has enlarged my ideals."

* from *Capt. Billy's Whiz Bang*, December 1921

Mabel Normand went off on a farm in Vermont last winter and drank milk until she could again ask her friends how one could lose weight. Just now, a distinguished looking gentleman with gray hair is trotting Mabel about to the dance emporiums.¹⁸⁴

* from *Los Angeles Record*, December 1, 1921

'Molly O' Is Excellent

By Linton Wells

LOS ANGELES -- or a considerable portion of the local motion picture colony, at least -- had the extreme pleasure of witnessing the local premier of Mack Sennett's "Molly O," starring Miss Mabel Normand, at the Mission theater last night.

An audience of motion picture players generally is hyper-critical. Thus being true of last night's audience, when those gathered literally and figuratively acclaimed Mabel Normand and "Molly O" unqualified success, then both must be just that. They are.

It is doubtful if Los Angeles has witnessed in a good long while a picture filled with such genuine humor, pathos, heart, interest, thrills, acting, evidence of exceptional directing and supervision, and rare photography. "Molly O" has everything a good picture should have, which means it has more than most pictures have these days, for there are so few GOOD pictures.

"Molly O" is a girl -- a quaint, appealing, little Irish girl -- as human as Mabel Normand herself. She is poor but ambitious, the extent of her ambitions being to love a man, Jack Mulhall, so far above herself in the social scale as to make him almost unapproachable.

But Fate and Mack Sennett -- work mysteriously their ways to perform, and Mabel meets him. The ending of the story is a foregone conclusion, but Mack Sennett and Dick Jones' method in reaching that conclusion is what makes the picture so interesting.

There isn't a bit of comedy in "Molly O" that is slap stick; a thrill or two is somewhat exaggerated, but wholly permissible; and the characterizations are so finely drawn as to make them humanly lovable.

"Molly O" is well cast. Jack Mulhall as the doctor, loved by "Molly O" is seen to distinct advantage. In lesser roles are Jacqueline Logan, Eugenie Besserer, Carl Stockdale, Albert Hackett and Ben Deely. Eddie Gribbon portrays well the hard-working man, hopelessly in love with "Molly O."

Perhaps the finest bit of acting is done by George Nichols as the honest, hard-working father of "Molly O." Anna Hernandez as her mother is typical. While Lowell Sherman as the villain is effectively natural.

But "Molly O" is Mabel Normand. Without her it could never be the really wonder picture it is. Deliciously human, she captivates.

"Molly O" begins its regular run at the Mission today. New York and Chicago motion picture patrons, according to reports, are clamoring for admittance to the theaters where "Molly O" is showing.

¹⁸⁴ Bruce Long: "This is certainly a reference to William Desmond Taylor."

There is no reason why Los Angeles patrons should not do likewise. In this City of the Angels we are able to appreciate an altogether good, interesting, appealing motion picture, and that is what "Molly O" is and then some.

* from *Los Angeles Evening Express*, December 1, 1921

'Molly O' Makes Audience Feel 'Oh, You Molly!'

By Monroe Lathrop

All the Mabel Normand fans will want to have the same pleasure that a large gathering of the film famous enjoyed last evening at the Mission theater. The lower Broadway house was the rendezvous of stars, directors and producers too numerous to mention, guests of Mack Sennett by his invitation to witness the western premiere of "Molly O."

"Molly O," as the world has already been well informed, is the first of Mr. Sennett's new series of pretentious departures from slapstick films; or it might be more accurate to say second, for "Mickey" was in truth the inspiration of his new policy, and "Molly O" is of its genre. The new picture is remarkable for its restraint: the very antithesis of all that the Sennett brand has stood for.

The new film is just the kind that Mabel's admirers like to see her in. She's funny and pretty and mischievous and abused. She leaps out of a burning barn loft, rides a bicycle through menacing traffic, skips blithely over roof-tops, and wins the heart of the handsome bachelor doctor.

The titles of "Molly O" are so witty that they cause as many laughs as the situations and are one of the biggest factors in the picture's success.

Miss Normand is the daughter of a laundry lady, Mrs. O'Dair, and a laboring man, Tim O'Dair. Molly O carries home the laundry and that is how she met Dr. John S. Bryant. Jack Mulhall was this doctor and all of the girls wanted him because he was so rich.

Finally in a series of cute scenes and impossible happenings, Molly O wins him. Her father turns her out of the house and his fiancée having just offered him his engagement ring back, he is free to marry Molly O.

Having done the last named act, the story is brought by the little heroine to a logical close, but director Richard Jones (who also made "Mickey") has tacked on for good measure a reel of thrills which, while they are good per se, are in the nature of a dramatic anti-climax.

Lowell Sherman, whose name sounds familiar, as the villain, kidnaps Mabel Normand in a huge airship. Jack Mulhall, the daring hero, gives chase in a sea plane. A few thousand feet above the clouds, while Molly O is beating off the handsome villain's sinister advances, Jack climbs for above the blimp in the seaplane, lowers a rope ladder, and drops in on the struggling couple just in time to thrust a brawny fist into the fight.

And as if that wasn't enough, the blimp catches fire so that Jack and Mabel needs must leap to earth in a parachute. And instead they plunge into the ocean. But their love is waterproof and they emerge locked in each other's arms. "Molly O" would be better without some of this.

But those who like romance get it, and those who like the thrill stuff get that, and everybody gets good measure. There are moments of strenuous comedy and moments of deep sentiment. It's an ideal part that was tailor-fitted to Mabel, and she's winsome and pert and animated after the fashion that won her first renown. Many other comedy points are subtly made and would be worthy of Pickford's art. It even made some improbable steps in the story almost credible.

Others of the cast have good roles, too. Jacqueline Logan is beautiful in a secondary part: Jack Mulhall and Lowell Sherman are perfect in filling out the romantic picture: George Nichols creates a character to remember as Tim O'Dair, and other parts worthy of mention are done by Eddie Gribbon, Eugenie Besserer, Anna Hernandez, Albert Hackett, Ben Deedy, Gloria Davenport and Carl Stockdale.

As a production "Molly O" is remarkably fine. Much of the photography is soft focus, and all of it is of the highest order.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, December 2, 1921

"The Writers" last night threw down the gauntlet to "The Lambs."

Vying in half a dozen qualities these two famous clubs of the West and the East promise a lively rivalry hereafter...

"The Writers' Cramp" was the occasion of the affair.

Just how the cramp originated is not made public, but it is generally supposed that it was first noticed in the region of the pocketbook when equipment for the "Writers'" new athletic field was to be provided.

In a spasm of optimism some one--they do say it was Marion Fairfax--conceived the idea of raising money to allay this cramp by a big public gathering. The public was entirely willing. In fact, some 1200 strong, Mr. and Mrs. Public responded with such a rush that the baby stars of filmdom who were selling tickets had to requisition trucks to carry home the money.

Whatever the financial result, the social development of the affair was remarkable. Folk of the studios met society on terms of equal footing, and a bond of common interest created which will make last night's dinner dance one of the memorable events of local history.

The array of distinguished men and woman assembled would alone have been worth all the price of admission. The fact that the cotillion form of dance was observed permitting every guest to dance with his or her screen favorite was a further pleasure provided, and finally a specially staged entertainment of wit, beauty and music completed the brilliance of an affair which every guest may recall with happiness for years to come...

As the lovely women stepped into the picture we forgot the world was made for anything but beauty...

Gloria Swanson, wisteria velvet embroidered in silver, rhinestones and pearls...

Colleen Moore, imported French gown of lavender chiffon, embroidered in blue and made over blue silk...

Bessie Love, pink tulle and pearl trimmings...

Mabel Normand, white and silver sequin with chiffon. Silver wreath in her hair...

Blanche Sweet, black velvet trimmed with silver.

* from *Los Angeles Evening Express*, December 3, 1921

Even a 'Blimp' Heeds Cuba's Call

Accidents such as wrecked the huge ZR-2, causing death to the majority of her crew, called attention to the fatal weakness which exists in all aircraft. The broad expanse of the surface which offers resistance to air currents seems to present an obstacle which the best engineers have not yet conquered.

Nearly everyone who has ridden in a "blimp" has encountered this danger and in one case this very weakness of such crafts carried an entire motion picture company from Florida to Cuba. The company was the one which appears in "Molly O," the Mack Sennett production starring Mabel Normand at the Mission Theater.

The climax of the picture is a scene in which Mabel is kidnapped and taken away in a "blimp" and the hero gives chase in an airplane. While the "blimp" was in the air for the "long shots" a heavy offshore breeze sprung up, blowing so stiffly that the commander stopped the engines and the big bag was carried down to Cuba. When the wind died down, Cuba was much closer than Florida and because of fuel shortage the bag proceeded to the former place.

After the storm, the commander replenished his fuel supply and started back, but Mabel Normand and the others of the cast preferred to return by steamer.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, December 4, 1921

Erin First to Bid for 'Molly O'

First of foreign countries to purchase rights to Mack Sennett's latest production, the Emerald Isle has cabled purchasing figures to the New York offices of Associated First National seeking exhibition privileges to the Mabel Normand feature.

Whether the Irish title had anything to do with it, or whether the foreign representatives of Mr. Sennett and Associated First National accepted the word of Eastern critics is unknown, but the Cinema Palace in Belfast, wants to show "Molly O" as quickly as a print can reach the other shores.

"Molly O" received its Eastern premiere in New York and Chicago this last week, and last Wednesday opened at the Mission Theater to a representative audience. All filmdom had been invited to attend -- and accepted. Harry David has embellished the presentation with an attractive musical program, headed by William Robyn, noted tenor.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, December 12, 1921

" Frances Agnew

Los Angeles -- Crowds of admiring fans and clicking cameras who recorded the arrival and departure of the silver sheet luminaries shared the street and lobby space in front of the Mission Theatre, Wednesday evening. The cause was the formal opening of Mack Sennett's best production, "Molly-O," with the irresistible Mabel Normand as Molly.

It was an invitation affair, the house being crowded with as many of the friends and acquaintances of the star and producer as it would hold, and hosts of them disappointed in not being present. And what an ovation they gave to Mabel, who, looking as lovely as always, sat in a loge between Charlie Chaplin and Abraham Lehr, two of her guests for the occasion. Even the scores of floral tributes banked on the stage and featured in the opening spotlight came in for special applause, further testimony of the popularity and appeal of the delightful star.

Fred Niblo, master of ceremonies deluxe, appeared in his customary opening night role and christened "Molly-O" with a humorous and, of course, dry toast to its success. Here's hoping Mr. Sennett will give us another "Molly-O" very soon, if for no other reason than to let us again appreciate the delightful art and beauty of Mabel Normand.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, December 15, 1921

" Lee Ettelson

The Examiner Christmas Benefit all-star performance last night was a huge success, a great event. No actors benefit ever had a more magnificent array of talent, no throng of people, such as bulged Philharmonic Auditorium last night, was ever so satisfied.

Nothing was missing, from Fred Niblo, who was chairman, toastmaster and master of ceremonies, to the Fox Sunshine Comedy Four who closed the program with a mystic something in gyrations called, "The Whirl of Mirth."

To mention the names of stars who took part in what, in recollection, becomes a huge spectacle, would be to give a stage a motion picture directory. Few stars of note were absent last night; and those who were not there were ill or out of the city, mostly.

...[Here follows a description of the various acts in the show]

And then -- what all waited for:

This was the 1921 Book of Fame, a famous book indeed, some nine feet high, gilded entrancingly, whose pages as they successively opened revealed the stars of the movie heavens, those who had won such a prominent place during the past year, personal appearances of names that thrill in any studio and household.

And as the book's pages were opened, the volume spoke:

May Allison, Agnes Ayres and Wesley Barry, Madge Bellamy, Lionel Belmore and John Bowers, Sylvia Breamer, May Collins, Jackie Coogan, Viola Dana, Mildred Davis, Marguerite de la Motte and Richard Dix, William Duncan, King Evers, Dustin Farnum, Helen Ferguson, Virginia Fox and Raymond Hatton. Jack Holt, Edith Johnson, Dorothy June and Alice Lake.

The book still turned back its pages, revealing Cullen Landis, Lila Lee, Bessie Love, Doris May, May McAvoy and Douglas MacLean; Frank Mayo, Mary Miles Minter, Baby Peggy Montgomery, Colleen Moore and Carmel Myers, Kathleen Myers, Mabel Normand, Dorothy Phillips, Pauline Starke and Anita Stewart, "Sunshine Sammy," Florence Vidor, George Walsh, Bryant Washburn, Lois Wilson and Claire Windsor.

A heaven of stars...

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, December 16, 1921

Trip Beneficial to Health of Film Favorite

Mabel Normand, with Fay Borden, still encouraging a friendship from early school days, is returning this week from a short vacation to Palm Springs, where Miss Normand journeyed following her doctor's advice, the idea being to shake off a cold she contracted while shooting early scenes in her forthcoming production "Suzanna."

It was first thought the cold would have a serious effect on Mabel Normand, but, with the proper and timely care being administered, a few days indoors sufficed to put the winsome little star on the well as again.

On her return from Palm Springs, Miss Normand will begin immediately to cooperate with Dick Jones in the production of "Suzanna."

* from *Los Angeles Evening Express*, December 31, 1921

Miss Molly O'Dair Still in Our Midst

An eleventh hour change in the presentation program of the Mission theater for the following week, actuated by the tremendous attention which followed the announcement that Mabel Normand in Mack Sennett's "Molly-O" would shortly close its run, gives Los Angeles theatergoers and especially those who have clamored for a final chance to meet Molly that opportunity, for a sixth and positively final week is now arranged for. This change sets back the opening date of Mr. George Arliss in "Disraeli" to Wednesday, January 11th.

The sudden upward tendency in attendance came as most gratifying to the sponsors of "Molly-O," indicating without a doubt the popularity which the picture enjoys and that it is now a household word in the homes of cinema patrons. Immediately following the holidays the Mission theater was packed at every performance, and despite the public's eagerness to see "Disraeli" those who wanted to see "Molly-O" were an imposing majority.

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* from *Los Angeles Evening Express*, January 3, 1922

Honor Specially 'Molly O' Herself

An honor performance will be staged at the Mission theater this evening for Miss Mabel Normand, star of Mack Sennett's remarkable triumph, "Molly O," which is now playing its sixth consecutive week.

The entire cast in support of the star has been invited to attend the performance, which will be crowned with the personal attendance of Miss Normand, providing no call for night work on her current working vehicle, "Suzanna," shall be chalked on the studio bulletin board. Those included in the list which will occupy loges are F. Richard Jones, director; George Nichols, Anna Hernandez, Jacqueline Logan, Jack Mulhall, Eddie Gribbon, Ben Deeley, Gloria Davenport, Carl Stockdale and Eugenie Besserer.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 8, 1922

Unattended by directors shouting "action" and in an atmosphere that was utterly lacking in suggestion of the sets of a studio, Lottie Pickford Rupp, sister to Mary Pickford, was married last night to Alan Forrest Fisher, known to the cinema world in which he is a star as Alan Forrest.

The ceremony was performed in the First Methodist Church of Hollywood by the Rev. Dr. Willsie Martin, its pastor, and in the presence of nearly every motion picture star on the Pacific Coast, to say nothing of several hundred residents of Hollywood and Los Angeles.

Following the wedding, the bridal party, accompanied by a few intimate friends, went to the Ambassador Hotel, where a wedding dinner was served. This morning Mr. and Mrs. Fisher will leave on an extended honeymoon jaunt.

Where are they going?

They refuse to tell.

The wedding ceremony was marked by its beautiful simplicity and lasted less than ten minutes. Long before it began, though, the guests, both those of the motion picture colony who knew the couple well and those who have met them through the "silver screen," had gathered outside the church.

The doors were not opened until a few minutes before seven-thirty, the hour set for the marriage. When the guests were finally admitted the large edifice was filled within a few seconds and so large was the crowd that failed to gain admittance that a detail of police officers from the Hollywood station was pressed into service to handle it.

Arrangements had been made for the bride and groom to enter the church from different vestibules, but when 7:30 came and it was time to start the wedding march, "Mary and Doug" had not arrived and there was a short delay. Miss Rupp arrived early with her mother, Mrs. Charlotte Pickford, and her brother, Jack, who was to give her away.

When "Doug" and "Mary" arrived there was a hurried whispered conference of all the party and "Doug" was sent into the church to take his seat with the other members of the family.

"Doug's" appearance was the signal for an enthusiastic outburst of applause from the ensembled guests. It was enthusiasm that could not be kept down apparently, thought the edifice was a church and the occasion a wedding. The object of the outburst, however, appeared none too well pleased and attempted to gain silence by nodding his head. It had no effect.

Many times have the members of last night's wedding participated in beautiful wedding ceremonies before the camera, but last night, face to face with reality, they appeared lost, and they frankly admitted they felt that way.

Miss Rupp was attended only by her sister. There was no bridesmaid and no ring bearer or flower girls.

Just as the wedding march commenced, when Miss Rupp and her sister and brother were waiting in the vestibule to start the processional, "Our Mary" pleadingly asked what she was to do.

"I'm nervous," she said, and she meant it.

"I'm nervous too," responded Jack. "Don't ask me."

"Well, let's go in," added the bride.

There was a hurried scamper and Mary took a position before the other two. No one was quite sure which arm Jack was supposed to offer the bride but with the aid of a reporter they finally were straightened out and started into the church.

Mary, forgetting her nervousness, head in the air and looking straight ahead like a little grenadier, led the bride and her brother up the side aisle and down the center of the chancel.

Both the bride and her maid-of-honor were beautifully gowned and both deserved the subdued exclamation of homage that came from the standing guests. The bride has always had an honest claim to be called pretty. As for Mary--well, who is there in the world who doesn't know of her almost childlike beauty, and she never looked prettier than last night.

The bridegroom and his best man, Eddie Sutherland, were waiting near the foot of the chancel and as the bride and groom met, Doctor Martin entered from the chancel door. Almost, it seemed, before the audience realized the ceremony had begun, it had finished and the recessional began.

There was a mad rush on the part of the guests to reach the street before Mr. and Mrs. Forrest were driven away. Only a few, however, succeeded in getting near them. The ushers, Hoot Gibson, Al Roscoe and Harry Cohn, anticipating just such a move, saw to it that bride and groom were well on the way to the Ambassador before the church was half emptied.

Other members of the family made their exit from side doors and they too were whirled away from the huge and curious crowd. "Doug" may have held up the wedding by being just a little bit late but he managed to get to the hotel before the rest of the party and was in possession when they arrived.

Among the guests at the wedding dinner were Mr. and Mrs. Tom Moore, Thomas Dixon, Steve Franklin, Hoot Gibson, Harry Cohn, Al Roscoe, May McAvoy, Mabel Normand, Mr. and Mrs. Urson, Lila Lee, Mrs. Charlotte Pickford, Mary Miles Minter, Bebe Daniels, Alice Lake, Mr. and Mrs. Canfield, Eddie Sutherland, Mr. and Mrs. Scott, Jack Pickford, and "Doug and Mary."

* from *Los Angeles Evening Herald*, January 9, 1922

Film Star to Fete Theater Attaches

Tomorrow night, following the closing performance of Mabel Normand's "Molly O" at the Mission, the star will give a dinner party for the attaches of the theater where the Mack Sennett comedy triumph has scored the remarkable run of six consecutive weeks. It is estimated that the total attendance during this time has been in excess of one hundred thousand.

* from *Long Beach Daily Telegram*, February 2, 1922

FILM PRODUCER ASSASSINATED¹⁸⁵

Lasky Director is Found With Bullet in Back

Shot down while writing at a desk by a mysterious assassin, William Desmond Taylor, well known motion picture producer and director, was found dead today in his bungalow in the Westlake District. Death was caused by a bullet wound in the back, just below the left shoulder, according to police.

Taylor, who was 50 years old and wealthy, apparently was killed between 9 and 10 o'clock last night. The body was found today by a colored servant when he reported for duty at the house.

Police detectives who first reached the scene reported that death was from natural causes and it was not until nearly an hour later when an undertaker was removing the body that the bullet wound was found.

Additional officers immediately were dispatched to the house and a comprehensive investigation was begun. The bullet wound caused an internal hemorrhage and Taylor accidentally died a few minutes after being attacked.

Detectives questioned neighbors, who stated they heard what apparently was the report of the revolver shortly after 9 p.m. but at that time believed it was caused by an automobile.

The police immediately began search for Edward F. Sands, former secretary of Taylor. Robbery was not the motive for the murder it was announced, as officers found \$73 in the pocket of the slain man, as well as a large amount of jewelry in the house.

Taylor's revolver was found in a drawer of the dresser in his bedroom on the second floor of the pretentious house. It had not been discharged and none of his personal effects had been disturbed.

The officers reported they are confident that revenge was the motive of the mysterious slayer.

The police records state that when Taylor went to England a year ago on a business and pleasure trip he left Sands, then his secretary, in charge of his personal affairs and when he returned he reported to Detective Sergeants Herman Cline and E. R. Cato that Sands had robbed him of money, jewelry, clothing and a valuable automobile.

A felony warrant was issued for Sands and the police say he never was found.

A second robbery at the Taylor residence was attributed to Sands by the police.

Among the witnesses questioned by the police during the morning were Mabel Normand, Edna Purviance and Douglas MacLean, prominent film stars.

Miss Normand admitted having visited Taylor's bungalow in the early evening yesterday to discuss a new production and that he had escorted her to her automobile at the curb shortly before 9 p.m. Taylor was to telephone to her later in the evening. Miss Normand said he did not do so.

Miss Purviance, who lives in a house adjoining Taylor's bungalow, returned home about midnight and saw a light burning in Taylor's study.

¹⁸⁵ This and subsequent articles included here about the Taylor case need to be read with particular care. Sometimes errors occur because of bad reporting, misinformation, a misunderstanding of facts, or perhaps because someone lied. Yet what students of the Taylor case often have to be prepared for is something reported that is actually true but which, in light of subsequent scholarship, seems to be a mistake. It *may* well be that what at first reading seems a mistake may in fact have been true, but that later investigators and reporters, either deliberately or mistakenly, have distorted the facts; so that it appears later to be a mistake. An example of this might be the time given as to when the shot killing Taylor was fired, in this piece it suggests that Taylor was killed about 9 p.m., when almost all later accounts assume, rightly or wrongly, that it was fired before 8 o'clock. See Appendix D.

MacLean and his wife, who live in the same district, stated they heard the shot fired after 9 o'clock. They thought at the time it might be an automobile exhaust. They described a strange man whom they saw in the street.

Miss Normand told detectives that while she was talking with Taylor early last evening concerning a new picture production the robberies of the Taylor home were mentioned.

"He told me he feared Sands and that he had a premonition of something wrong," Miss Normand was quoted as telling officers.

Charles Maigne, an actor, said he was riding with Taylor last Monday and that he warned Taylor to guard against his former employee.

In the first robbery, while Taylor was in Europe, the house was completely ransacked. All the director's clothing was taken and his automobile was found later in a damaged condition.

The money entrusted to Sands, the valet secretary, by the motion picture director for the payment of current bills had been spent for other purposes, the bills being paid with forged checks, it was charged.

Accounts had been opened in Taylor's name at several Los Angeles department stores and large quantities of goods ordered. Lingerie and women's garments were predominant which created the supposition that the valet was led to his embezzlements by a sweetheart.

Many checks had been forged, the large check book filled with forged signatures, some of them spoiled, was found by Taylor. He placed this matter in the hands of the police.

A few weeks ago the Alvarado street house was again broken into under mysterious circumstances. The back door was literally wrecked in gaining entrance. Nothing was taken by the burglars except jewelry and a stock of gold tipped cigarettes of an exclusive brand. The marauders leisurely devoured food they found in the tea box, but did not touch a bottle of champagne there in their ransacking. They walked about with dusty shoes on the bed upstairs. This was reported to the police.

A week later Mr. Taylor's colored servant found the butt of a gold tipped cigarette on the front doorstep one morning.

"Pardon me, Mr. Taylor, but have you bought more of these cigarettes," he asked?

"No," said the director, and examined the butt. It was the butt of one of the stolen stock. One of the burglars had returned for some inexplicable reason and enjoyed a midnight smoke on the doorstep of his victim.

It was following the second robbery that a mystery letter marked from Sacramento was received by Taylor. This letter was signed "Alias Jimmy V."¹⁸⁶ It read as follows:

Dear Mr. Taylor, So sorry to inconvenience you, even temporarily. Also observe the lesson of the forced sale of assets. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. (Signed) "Alias Jimmy V."

Two pawn tickets were enclosed in the letter. Taylor told his friend that he recognized the handwriting on the letter.

Police detectives today sought to recover the pawn tickets from among Taylor's belongings and began a search for the man whom the film director had told his friend was the writer of the mysterious "Jimmy V." letters.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 3, 1922

REVENGE FOR ATTENTION PAID TO GIRL REGARDED AS MOTIVE FOR CRIME

Officers last night were concentrating their efforts on locating a mysterious desperado who is sought as the slayer of William Desmond Taylor, one of the best known directors in the motion picture world, who was found murdered at his bungalow home of 404-B South Alvarado street yesterday morning.

The officers were diligently following the trail of the mysterious man after they learned that several times the strange nocturnal visitor had been driven away by Taylor at the point of a gun.

But two weeks ago, the investigators said Taylor found this man trying to gain entrance to the bungalow by means of a bedroom window. The window was half open and Taylor is said to have driven him away.

Many times the murdered director is said to have heard unusual noises about the house and upon investigation found the unwelcome visitor prowling about the building or premises, but each time Taylor flourished a gun and drove him away.

And then again, the police say in trying to weave a chain of incriminating evidence about the hunted man, Taylor received telephone calls which brought forth no response when he answered. It is believed the calls came from this person who was ascertaining if any one was at home at the bungalow.

It was within half an hour after Mabel Normand, famous screen actress, and Taylor had a chat early Wednesday evening that he was killed, the police believe.

They are also trying to run down clues which they say have found and which indicate that jealousy or revenge was the motive. They are inclined to believe that the former is the possible solution of the death.

That a man committed the crime is based upon information furnished by Mrs. Douglas MacLean, wife of the film star, who lives next door to the Taylor home, and by her maid. They say they saw a mysterious man at the Taylor home before and after the murder.

A .38 caliber steel-nose bullet caused Taylor's death. This was determined and the bullet found when Autopsy Surgeon Wagner performed a post mortem on the body early last night.

The bullet had penetrated the back beneath the left shoulder blade, pierced the heart and then took a right upward course into the neck, where it lodged.

While three theories are being considered by the police, certain material clues developed late yesterday lead them to believe that behind the tragedy is the shadow of a woman.

The partly told story of Taylor's murder is this:

At 6:45 Wednesday night he ate dinner in his little bungalow court home. He was alone. His servant was the only other person in the house. Shortly after 7 o'clock, Miss Mabel Normand, famous screen star, and whose

¹⁸⁶ The reference here is to "Alias Jimmy Valentine," a story written by O. Henry and made in 1915 into a film directed by Maurice Tourneur; in which a respectable citizen's shady past as a safe-cracker comes back to haunt him; by threatening to reveal his past identity to those he loves.

engagement to the slain man had been generally rumored for many months but, denied by her, went to the Taylor home.

She remained, according to her story to the police, until about 7:45 o'clock. She had called for the purpose of obtaining a book that Taylor desired her to read.

When she left, Taylor escorted her to her automobile, waiting at the entrance to the bungalow court.

When Taylor departed from the house with Miss Normand he left the door open.

What happened?

The servant, Henry Peavey, a negro who has been with Taylor for about six months, said Miss Normand and Taylor were together in the living room when he left to go to his own home about 7:20 o'clock.

Yesterday morning, as was his custom, he arrived to prepare breakfast at 7:30 o'clock.

He had a key to the front door and opened it. He started to go in and then noticed Taylor lying on his back with his feet near the door. The servant did not enter. When Taylor failed to answer his alarmed cries he rushed to the home of a neighbor and called the police.

Some time between 7:45 o'clock and 7:55 o'clock the night before, Taylor had been shot.

Here are the theories on which police detectives are concentrating their efforts. Taylor was shot by $\frac{3}{4}$

1. A woman he had scorned or whom he had enraged.

2. A discarded suitor of some woman with whom he had been friendly.

3. A burglar who was surprised by Taylor when he returned to the house after escorting Miss Normand to her car.

Among the clues being followed by the police is one furnished by employees at the Morosco Theater, who stated that several weeks ago a man inquired for Taylor's address and by his insistence and strange actions aroused their suspicions. The officers are trying to locate this individual, who would not take "no" for an answer to his questions as to where the director resided.

A former secretary whom Taylor had caused to be arrested for forgery and who is said to have threatened his life, is being sought for information he may be able to give bearing on the case.

Taylor is known to have been friendly with many women. He is said to have been a man of charming personality and of considerable magnetism. Outside of one particular prominent woman he was not known, say police, to have been particularly interested in any one.

It is possible, say police, that some man, enamored of any one of the women with whom Taylor might have been on friendly terms, could have become enraged, waited his opportunity at the Taylor home, and then killed Taylor from ambush.

Every possible angle of Taylor's private life is now being investigated by the detectives in connection with the first two theories.

That the second will prove to be correct the officers believe. This belief is based on what Mrs. Douglas MacLean, wife of a motion picture director, residing in the house next to that of Taylor, saw.

At 7:10, according to Mrs. MacLean's maid, Mr. and Mrs. MacLean sat down to dinner. While the second course was being served the maid claims to have heard footsteps of a man in a rear alley running between the two houses.¹⁸⁷ She commented upon it to her employers, but thought nothing of it until she heard of the murder yesterday morning.

At 7:50 o'clock, six minutes after Miss Normand left with Taylor to go to her machine, Mrs. MacLean heard a shot and went to her door.

A man was just leaving the Taylor home.

He was not Sands, the valet. Mrs. MacLean is sure of this, she says. She knew Sands.

When she saw the man he was just stepping through the door. He turned half-way around, glanced back through the door and then pulled it shut.

He saw her, she says, as she stood watching him, but did not show any alarm. She closed her door just as he started away from the Taylor home.

He walked, she declared, not out to Alvarado street to the main entrance, but disappeared through the alley leading between Taylor's house and hers.

The mysterious visitor was large of stature, wore dark rough clothing and had a muffler and cap on. She could not see his face.

This man, the police believe, is the murderer.

They believe it was he whom the MacLean's maid heard as she was serving dinner. It is probable, they think, that he was acquainted with Taylor's habits.

Friends say that Taylor left the door open when he left his home for a few minutes.

The mysterious visitor is believed to have secreted himself around the corner of the house and watched until Taylor came out with Miss Normand. As the two walked toward the film star's car, the assassin probably hurried into the house through the door left open by his victim.

When Taylor was found his body was lying with the head toward the east wall, directly in front of a writing desk. The feet were near the door the legs outstretched. He was on his back.

It is the police theory that when he returned to the house after bidding Miss Normand good night he sat down at the desk to work. An open check book was lying on the desk, a pen nearby, when the murder was discovered.

The murderer, waiting behind a pillar in the room, stepped out when he believed Taylor to be settled in the chair and fired.

The bullet entered below the left shoulder blade and penetrated the heart.

Taylor died instantly, pitched forward and in falling upset the chair. The chair was found lying across his legs when the body was discovered. Intimate friends say that it was the one used by Taylor at his desk.

The murderer is then believed to have hurried to the door, glanced back just as Mrs. MacLean discovered him and then fled through the alley.

¹⁸⁷ A walkway divided the Taylor and MacLean bungalows, not an alley.

When Peavey, the servant, saw the body of his dead master, as he opened the front door yesterday morning, screaming into the bungalow court yard, Mrs. Verne Dumas, who heard his cries, called the police.

Detectives who responded made a casual examination, but did not turn the body over until Coroner Nance reached the scene.¹⁸⁸ The first report issued from the headquarters was that Taylor had died of natural of causes.

As soon as it became known that the director had been murdered Detective Captain David Adams assigned every available officer to the case. Officials from the public administrator's office were sent to the house and took charge of the dead man's personal effects. Thousands of dollars worth of jewels were found in his bedroom.

A half completed income tax blank lying on the desk showed his annual income to be \$37,000.

Coroner Nance ordered the body sent to the undertaking parlors of Ivy Overholtzer on South Flower street and detectives then began the work of running down the murderer.

According to Peavey, the servant, his murdered master had no enemies that he knew of nor had he had any difficulty with any guest that had visited the house while he was present.

When he left for the night Wednesday, Taylor seemed to be in high spirits and was conversing in an animated manner with Miss Normand. Police are convinced that the servant can throw no light on the mystery.

Miss Normand told Detective Sergeants Wallace and Ziegler that she had gone to two jewelry stores downtown before she went to Taylor's home. They were closed and after buying some peanuts from a vendor at Seventh street and Broadway and a copy of the Police Gazette she hurried to Taylor's home.

Her story and that of her chauffeur, William Davis, coincide, Miss Normand claims that she left the Taylor home about 7:45 o'clock, and that he director walked with her to the machine, leaving, as was his custom, the door open behind him.

When they reached the car, she says, her chauffeur had been reading the magazine. He hastily threw it aside and Taylor saw it. The couple had been discussing literature and he chided her good naturedly about reading that type of magazine.

She says that after she left Taylor at the curbing she immediately returned to her home. While in Taylor's home she had discussed with Taylor a certain charge made against his negro servant involving social vagrancy.

Miss Normand was informed by motion picture friends of the tragedy soon after the body was discovered. She refused to receive callers outside of headquarters officers and close intimate friends.

To further the theory that Taylor was killed by some one other than his former valet, police point to a story told by a guest in the Dumas home, near by, who claims that on last Monday night early he saw two men go up to the door of the Taylor home, try the door with a key and then walk away. One of these men is believed to have been the murderer.

Several others in the block beside Mr. and Mrs. MacLean claim to have heard the fatal shot. E. C. Jessurum, owner of the court, who was ill in bed, heard it and called it to the attention of his wife, who was reading to him. Not hearing a second shot, they thought nothing of the interruption.

One of the first visitors at the Taylor home after police detectives had taken charge was Mary Miles Minter, mutual friend of Miss Normand and the murdered man.

Friends had informed her of the tragedy. Accompanied by her mother,¹⁸⁹ she hurried to the Taylor home, but was met at the door by Detective Sergeant Hermann Cline, who briefly told her what had happened. She became hysterical and it was several minutes before she could talk coherently.

She said that Taylor had directed her in three pictures and that she considered him an intimate friend. She knew of no enemies that might have sought his death, she said.

"Why, he was a wonderful," she added, "and every one that knew him loved him." This sentiment was voiced, too, by her mother. Miss Minter said that the last time she saw Taylor was Wednesday afternoon that "he felt that something was going to happen to him."

They laughed the subject away, though, and apparently Taylor forgot it. He told the same thing to other persons -- friends in the motion picture colony, but all ridiculed the idea.

The house in which Taylor was found is lavishly furnished. The lower floor consists of a living room, dining room and kitchen. Upstairs, with the stairway leading from the dining room, are two bedrooms. One of these rooms was used by Taylor to sleep in. The other was reserved as a guest chamber.

Photographs, all of them affectionately autographed, of famous stars, whom Taylor had directed are the most conspicuous decorations in the living room. These include one of Mary Pickford, who describes Taylor as "the most patient man I ever knew."

A search of the house by detectives and the deputy police administrator revealed a large quantity of expensive bonded liquors. This was taken charge of together with his other personal effects.

Late yesterday afternoon Detective Captain Adams assigned Detectives Sergeants Hermann Cline, Murphy and Winn to the case.

The detectives, after interviewing Miss Normand's chauffeur, admitted that the case is one of the most baffling that has confronted the Los Angeles department for many years.

Sands, the former valet being sought, is said to be in Los Angeles, and several friends of Taylor told police last night that they had seen him. Every officer has been furnished with his description and given orders to arrest him on sight. Police are not yet ready, they say to implicate him in the murder, but he is the one known man who would have a motive for desiring Taylor's death, and his explanation of where he was on the night of the murder is anxiously awaited by officers.

If he is innocent, they believe, despite felony warrant already issued for him, he will surrender rather than take the chance of being accused of suspicion of murder by remaining in hiding.

* from *Los Angeles Evening Herald*, February 3, 1922

¹⁸⁸ It was not Nance himself who arrived on the scene, but instead a deputy coroner.

¹⁸⁹ There is some dispute as to whether it was Minter's grandmother or mother who accompanied her. It would seem to have been her grandmother, though accounts, as illustrated above, differ.

Sennett To film California Epic

Mack Sennett is to immortalize on film the romantic days of early California immediately preceding the Mexican war.

The production now well underway on the Sennett lot, has been titled "Suzanna," and Mabel Normand selected to portray the title role, under the direction of F. Richard Jones.

Recently, in speaking of "Suzanna," Sennett was enthusiastic over the possibilities of his latest comedy drama.

"Never have I encountered" he said, "such infinite possibilities for screen adaptation as the romance and adventure -- in fact, the history -- of those early California days. So readily does that period, and the romantic people of the time lend themselves to filming that I am prepared to say now that no Sennett picture yet produced will equal "Suzanna" when finally it is completed.

"I feel" the producer continued, "that California history deserves a niche in the archives of filmdom the same at it has in the history of the world.

"We have found that, for the most part, those who peopled California from the time of its settlement in 1602 until the time of the Mexican war were the highest type of Spaniards and Mexicans. Naturally, there was a bad element, but it was a very small minority. Those early California Dons ruled not only wisely, but well. They ruled by might true; but they ruled by right, as well. And I want "Suzanna" to be a fitting monument to their memory.

"My reasons for producing "Suzanna" are twofold: Material, yes, but primarily to record on celluloid the romance and adventure of a period in California history which I love, which I know is interesting and which I feel has been too long ignored. And I am certain that it will be of vast interest not only to the people of America, but to those of the Old World as well. At any rate, to attain this end, we will spare no expense, no effort, no time."

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 3, 1922

Mabel Normand Tells Of Last....'Were The Best Of Pals,' Says Film Star

Affair of Heart With Tragedy Victim is Denied

By Lannie Haynes Martin

MISS MABEL NORMAND, Mack Sennett film star, who was probably the last friend to see William D. Taylor, the Lasky film director who was shot Wednesday night, alive, told in detail late yesterday afternoon, the time and the incidents of her visit to his home early in the evening, previous to the shooting, and stated that she had no doubt that the person who shot him was the man who had twice robbed him and who had annoyed him with mysterious telephone calls recently.

"There was no affair of the heart whatever between William D. Taylor and myself," said Miss Normand yesterday afternoon at her beautiful home in West Seventh and Vermont avenue. "His friendship for me was that of an older man for a girl who liked the outdoor sports he liked and who was eager to glean a little enlightenment from the vast storehouse of knowledge which he possessed.

"Mr. Taylor was a man who knew everything. If I wanted to know the meaning of an unusual word I did not have to take the trouble to hunt up a dictionary. I just had my secretary telephone Mr. Taylor. If I wanted to find the name of a painter or sculptor of some rare work of art he was sure to know that, too, and if I were puzzling over some classical or scientific reference in my reading, I only had to ask him to have the entire matter explained, for besides having the education and the instincts of an artist, he was a deep student of science as well.

"I liked to go out with Mr. Taylor because there was a certain protective dignity in his quiet high bred manner that prevented the obtrusive, offensively familiar person who had only seen my face on the screen, from running up and saying, 'Hello, Mabel!' and we were the best of pals. I think Mr. Taylor had the finest, highest sense of honor of almost any one I have ever known, and I respected him and admired him more than I can tell. My chief liking for him, however, was because of his wonderful brain and the things he could teach me. I am studying French, and as he spoke French fluently he was of great assistance to me and there was hardly a day that he did not recommend some book to me to read. It was to get a book he had phoned about that I went to his house Wednesday evening about 7 o'clock.

"I had been downtown shopping and was at my bank and phoned home to my housekeeper to know if there had been any calls for me. She said Mr. Taylor had phoned that he had the book I wanted, so I attended to a few errands and had my chauffeur drive me by Mr. Taylor's home. I sat down for a few minutes, commented on the change he had made in some bookcases. I had not seen the place in a couple of months. We talked a little of books and plays and he asked me to stay for dinner, saying that although he had had his dinner, he wanted me to try a certain kind of rice pudding his cook had made, but I told him that I had phoned home I would be back to dinner and they were expecting me.

"He then told his colored boy that I would not be staying for dinner and the boy went out just ahead of us. Mr. Taylor took me to my car and on the floor of the car were a number of magazines, some of them, were rather light and I suppose sensational. Mr. Taylor expressed surprise that I read such things and rather upbraided me for having such low-brow taste. He gave me the book, as I got in the car. It was one of Freud's latest, and said I will phone after (a)while and see how you like it. That was the last I ever heard his voice. This morning when Edna Purviance rushed in and said Mr. Taylor was dead I was sure it was all some horrible mistake.

"I came home from Mr. Taylor's house, had my dinner and was in bed before 9 o'clock. I read a little while and when he did not phone I wondered a little and then thought no more about it and went to sleep.

"Mr. Taylor was so uniformly kind to every one. It seems horrible that he should have met a death of this kind, and with the exception of the man who had been in his employ and who had robbed him, I cannot believe he had an enemy in the world. He had a warrant sworn out for the man, but he had never been apprehended. Yesterday Mr. Taylor told his secretary that he had a strange presentiment about this man and wished he had not had the warrant sworn-out.

"I wish there were something I could do to throw some light on this terrible tragedy, but it was mere chance that took me to his door a few hours before it happened and I feel very indignant as do also the members of my household and the managers and directors of my company, that my name should have been unnecessarily connected

with the unhappy event. Any one, out of scores of his acquaintances might have called at his house on that particular evening and it seemed a cruel thing to me that I should be questioned about it.

"I have known Mr. Taylor for six or seven years. He had high ideals regarding his work and a far reaching vision that made him have great faith in the wonderful things that the moving picture has yet to do. He not only had an eye for beautiful objects and harmony of composition and arrangement, but he had a soul that appreciated the abstract beauty that these things stood for as symbols. To him loyalty, honor, faith, justice and beauty were realities. They were forces that move the world onward and sculpture out recognized qualities in the human countenance. And it was the clean, wholesome beautiful things of life that he wanted to portray on screen.

"Mr. Taylor was a wonderful conversationalist because he observed everything and everybody with the eye of understanding sympathy. He could tell of his travels in Alaska or his trips through Europe and the stories would not be merely geographical descriptions of countries and customs, but philosophical observations that made all of his experiences a commentary on life.

"I feel proud to have called such a man friend and am sorry that his extreme modesty and diffidence kept many from knowing the depth and brilliance of his true nature. But he was not in the least pedantic or high-browish. He was full of wit and jest and he would tease and twit me about things I did or wore, and sometimes we would have a perfect gab fest, in slang, just like a couple of kids. He was just an all around, sure-enough human being.

"I am just in the middle of a big picture and, of course, I am going right on working, but the sudden news of the tragic death of such a friend as this was naturally a great shock to me and I am all broken up today."

Besieged by friends, members of her profession and representatives of the press, Miss Normand denied herself to all callers yesterday and remained in the seclusion of her room, a dainty rose and old ivory boudoir whose walls are lined with books of verse, of plays, of fiction, philosophy, science and history. There were books on the dresser, scattered all over gold-mounted toilet articles, big fat books on art sprawling all over a chaise-lounge, and on a little stand by her bed there were some volumes of poetry and psycho-analytical philosophy.

"Yes, I do read a great deal," confessed Miss Normand, "one has to in order to understand what other people are talking about and most of the books you see here were either given me or suggested by Mr. Taylor. I sometimes wondered how he ever got the time to read all the different kinds, of things he had read.

"Mr. Taylor was a man who would have been a credit to any profession on the face of the earth, because he lived a clean, wholesome, upright, life of kindness and usefulness to his fellow beings. Those of us who believe in our art and our profession and have ideals and ambitions for the attainment of success and for that thing which is valued above great riches, a good name, feel that we have not only lost a personal friend, but that the profession has lost a rare exemplar whose influence will be missed by all."

* from *Los Angeles Record*, February 3, 1922

Never Any Love Affair: So Says Mabel Normand

By Linton Wells

"If I had been engaged to marry Mr. Taylor, I would be only too proud to acknowledge it."

In such manner did Miss Mabel Normand, movie star, reiterate to me her denial of any engagement with William D. Taylor, the director, who was murdered Wednesday evening.

Tears were in Miss Normand's eyes, her lithe body quivered and shook. She was under a terrible nervous strain. Her voice quavered and broke while she spoke of the dead man.

"I had known Mr. Taylor for years," she continued, "ever since I've lived at the Buckingham, but there never was any love affair existing between us -- ever!"

"I loved Mr. Taylor as a good comrade -- a pal with whom I could discuss subjects in which we were both mutually interested. For instance, I had been studying French and Mr. Taylor, who spoke French fluently, helped me tremendously. And, too, I have been somewhat interested in philosophy and metaphysics, and in those subjects he was again an invaluable teacher.

"I seldom saw Mr. Taylor, it's true, except at a gathering of friends. But frequently I conversed with him over the telephone. As a general rule merely to ask certain questions regarding the subjects I just mentioned.

"Wednesday evening was the first time I ever called upon Mr. Taylor alone. Then I stopped in for a few minutes on my way home in response to a message from Mr. Taylor left with my secretary. The message stated that Mr. Taylor already sent one book I wanted to the house and had purchased another -- one I wanted particularly -- and had it at his place. It was for that book that I stopped by.

"I arrived about 7 o'clock and left at 7:45. He accompanied me to my car and talked to me a few minutes, laughingly criticizing my literary taste; there was a copy of the Police Gazette in the car and he thought it didn't very well fit in with Freud and Nietzsche [Nietzsche].

"After saying good night and promising to phone me within an hour, I directed William, my chauffeur, to drive me home. Being tired and having a studio call at 7:30 next morning, I retired to my room and within a few minutes I was in bed, where I had dinner served to me. That was about 8:15. Then I dropped off to sleep and slept until Edna Purviance phoned me the following morning the news of Mr. Taylor's death.

"Did I know that Mr. Taylor had been married? No, I don't know now that he was. People had told me, but I don't know if it was true. Mr. Taylor never discussed with me his private affairs; there was no reason for his doing so.

"I am so terribly shocked over this horrible tragedy. I don't know what to do or say. It doesn't seem possible that anyone so lovable -- a man who had so many friends and not a known enemy could have been so brutally killed.

"My one wish is that the murderer be apprehended and that punishment, however horrible, be meted out to him."

* from *Gary Post-Tribune*, February 3, 1922

Music Mabel's Best Director

If you want to be a vamp --

Or a wild woman --

Or a baby doll --
 Or any of the other things you see in the movies -- you can! At least so says Mabel Normand, screen star.
 All you've got to do, according to Miss Normand, is practice to appropriate music.
 "Music," she says, "will do anything to me. If I come to the studio feeling particularly upstage and patrician -- I suppose there is such a feeling as patrician? -- the sound of a little tough music will set my heart to jigging, my feet to wiggling and my pulses to jumping. In a trice, I am lifted out of my ladylike languor into the person the music is talking about. The minuet-type of melody has just the opposite effect. Right away it slows me down, puts my best manners in place, and there I am -- a perfect lady."
 Which is why, out of the album of what she calls her "mood music," pretty Mabel chose "When Francis Dances With Me" to be played while she made "Molly-O," her new First National picture.
 Molly -- well Molly is the sort of girl to whose name shocked relatives invariably -- and with good reason -- add the exclamation oh!
 As for Francis -- it is of his dancing prowess that the "goils" of Tenth Avenue and the Bowery sing in a melody that has won the shimmying heels of all New York.
 So they played "Francis" for three months while Mabel made 'Molly O.' "I never tired of it once," says Mabel. "It was the best director I ever had."

* from *Los Angeles Record*, February 4, 1922

The verdict was:
 "William Desmond Taylor met his death from a gunshot wound inflicted in the chest by person or persons unknown, with intent to kill or murder."
 The inquest was held at the Ivy Overholter undertaking establishment, Tenth and Hill streets.
 The stars were unmindful of the battery of cameras that clicked as they stepped off the broad stairway to the inquest chamber.
 Mr. and Mrs. Douglas MacLean were the first notables to arrive. They sat together towards the side of the room. They were grave and solemn. They spoke to each other seldom, seemingly overcome by the tragedy that had stalked through the home of their neighbor.
 Frank Nance, coroner, directed the inquest. Some delay in starting the taking of testimony was occasioned by the failure of some of the witnesses to appear promptly.
 Because Miss Mabel Normand did not arrive on time, the undertaker sent a message to her home, notifying her to come immediately.
 A solemn quiet overhung the room in which the coroner's inquest was held. People spoke in whispers. There was a spirit of indifference apparent to all. Every thing was conducted solemnly and quietly.
 Velvet curtains hid the swinging door into the chamber where the dead body of Taylor lay.
 In the center of this room the body, covered with a silken shroud, rested on an inclined bier. Only his head was visible. Though peaceful and calm, his features showed the kindly strength of the character of the man. His thinning brown hair brushed back over his broad forehead was the only evidence of color. Several of the witnesses tiptoed into the room, gazed at the body for a moment and then silently stepped out.
 A delicate scent of perfume tinged the air as Mabel Normand, the star of "Mickey" and "Molly O," took the witness chair.
 Mabel was modishly but quietly dressed. She spoke in a low voice, but with a resonance that carried it to the far corners of the old-fashioned undertaking chapel.
 "You were acquainted with the dead man?" she was asked.
 "I was."
 "When did you last see him?"
 "On Wednesday evening."
 "Where?"
 "At his home."
 "About what time?"
 "I arrived about 7, I think, and left at a quarter to 8."
 "Did you leave him at the door of his home?"
 "No. He accompanied me to my car, which was parked on the hill in front of the court where he has a bungalow. He stood on the step a moment, after I had driven away. When my car was turning, I looked back and waved to him."
 "Was anyone else present during your visit?"
 "Henry, his colored man, was there."
 "All the time?"
 "No. He left about 15 or 20 minutes before I did. He stopped and talked to my chauffeur on the way out."
 "No one else was present with you and Mr. Taylor after Henry had left?"
 "No one."
 There was a little silence.
 "You never saw or talked with Mr. Taylor after you left?"
 "No. He had asked me to go out to dinner with him, but I excused myself because I was too tired and had an early call for the next evening. So he told me he would telephone me within an hour."
 "Did he call you?"
 "No."
 "Did you ring him, to ascertain what was the matter?"
 "No. I had retired and was asleep. I didn't think anything more of his promise to call me. He often called me at night, but if I was in bed he always told my maid not to disturb me."
 "That is all, Miss Normand."
 The actress immediately left the chapel.
 "When did you last see him?"

Charles Eyton, general manager of the West Coast studios of the Famous Players-Lasky corporation and a close personal friend of Taylor's, was the initial witness called when the inquest was opened.

His testimony was switched ahead of that of Mabel Normand, because of the latter's late arrival.

Eyton told of being called to Taylor's bungalow home in the exclusive Westlake Terrace court by Harry Fellows, assistant director with the Taylor company at the Lasky studios.

"Fellows called me early Thursday morning," Eyton said. "He said Taylor had died suddenly.

"I hastened to his home. Douglas MacLean and his wife, a deputy coroner and others were there.

"The deputy coroner said Taylor had apparently died of a hemorrhage of the stomach.

"I looked under his head the body had not been moved -- and saw some blood, clotted.

"The deputy coroner said that the blood had apparently run from his mouth, and had been caused by the hemorrhage. I looked under the body, however, and saw more blood under his vest.

"I suggested that this was sufficient evidence to warrant turning Taylor over.

"This was done.

"We saw he had been shot through the back."

"The body was cold when you found it?"

"Stone cold, and stiff. He had evidently been dead for some time."

"Did you question the neighbors?"

"Mr. and Mrs. MacLean volunteered the information that they had heard a muffled report, something like a shot, on Wednesday night."

A juror interposed a question.

"Was Mr. Taylor's clothing ruffled? Did you notice any sign of a struggle?"

"No. He had apparently been killed instantly by the shot and fell backward on the floor."

Dr. A. F. Wagner, county autopsy surgeon, was the next witnessed called.

He related the findings of an autopsy performed on Taylor's body February 2.

"The bullet entered the left side six and a half inches below the arm pit, took an upward course and punctured the left lung," he said.

Henry Peavey, Taylor's negro servant, next took the stand. Henry was arrayed in a black and white checkered suit with a knife edged crease in the trousers, a yellow silk shirt and a bow tie.

"You were employed by Mr. Taylor?" he was asked.

"Yes sir, as cook and valet."

"For how long?"

"Six months."

"When did you last see him?"

"Wednesday night, when he and Miss Normand was sitting together in the dining room of his bungalow, talking about a red-backed book."

"You left before Miss Normand did?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Taylor, he told me I could. I stopped out at the curb and talked to Miss Normand's chauffeur. He had all the lights in her limousine turned on, and he was cleaning it out. I stepped up and slapped him on the back, kind of friendly like, and talked with him for a little bit."

"What time did you return to Mr. Taylor's home?"

"About 7:30 the next (Thursday) morning. I had stopped at a drug store to get a paper and a bottle of milk of magnesia for Mr. Taylor.

"I had them under my arm when I unlocked the front door.

"I saw Mr. Taylor laying on the floor. His feet were toward me. I stopped for a minute, kind of puzzled.¹⁹⁰

"'Mist' Taylor," I said. "'Mist' Taylor."

"He -- he didn't answer me."

Peavey broke into sobs tears rolled down his mobile face.

"Well," Henry resumed, after drying his eyes with a colorful silk handkerchief, "I saw he was dead, so I ran out into the courtyard and started to yell.

"Mr. MacLean and lots of other people -- I don't know their names -- came in then.

"I stayed around and heard them say at first that he died of heart failure or something. Later, when Mr. Eyton came, they said he had been shot."

Henry was crying again. There was no doubt of the sincerity of his affection for his employer.

"Was the room in order?"

"Yes, sir. Nothing had been disturbed."

"Had his jewelry been removed?"

"No, sir. I noticed, distinctly, the big diamond ring he always wears. His watch chain was there, too, with a little thing on the end of it what you use to keep people from raising checks on you."

"Any windows open?"

"No, sir. All closed and locked, except them upstairs in Mr. Taylor's bedroom, what was always open."

T. H. Ziegler, first police officer to arrive on the scene after the body had been found, was the final witness called.

Ziegler corroborated Eyton's testimony.¹⁹¹

In addition, he said, he had questioned neighbors closely.

"Mr. and Mrs. MacLean and Jesserum, who owned the bungalow court, all told me they had heard a sound like a shot Wednesday night."

¹⁹⁰ Compare this version of Peavey's finding the body to the one he gave in his first interviews -- see Appendix D.

¹⁹¹ Ziegler had good reason to corroborate Eyton testimony since it was Ziegler who, either recklessly or with bad intention, permitted Eyton, Harry Fellows (brother of Howard Fellows) and other Lasky studio people to rummage through Taylor's bungalow while the investigation of the site by the police was still in progress.

"The times they set approximated 8 o'clock. Possibly there was 30 minutes difference in the estimates given me by the witnesses."

"Yet none of them investigated the noises."

"None, except Mrs. MacLean. She opened the door of her home, which adjoins Taylor's, and saw a man leaving, she said. He peered at her for a moment, then walked quietly away up an alleyway between Taylor's home and his garage.

"She said she decided that the round was only an automobile back-firing, and so dismissed the matter from her mind."

The inquest was concluded with unexpected abruptness.

Edna Purviance, the MacLeans and others present at the finding of Taylor's body, were not called.

The jury rendered its verdict without delay.

County Autopsy Surgeon A. S. Wagoner had the bullet with which Taylor was shot in his possession. It was of .38 caliber size. It was slightly blunted at the end, presumably because it struck Taylor's shoulder blade.

Doctors declared before the inquest that Taylor's assailant must have been crouching to the floor when he fired the fatal shot.

From the position the bullet entered the body it must have started from the smoking revolver at not more than a foot from the floor. It entered his left side and plowed upward toward the neck, it was testified.

* from *Chicago Tribune*, February 5, 1922

Mabel sat in her gasoline hack,

Eating peanuts by the sack;

She heard a shot but would not go,

Because she loved the peanuts so.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, February 5, 1922

"Frances Agnew

Los Angeles, Jan. 30 -- Mabel Normand is grieving for Ouija, her pedigreed chow dog, who died last week despite the efforts of best medical aid.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 6, 1922

Actress Expresses Anxiety to Recover Jestings Letters

"I sought those letters and hoped to get them before they reached the scrutiny of others. I admit this but it was for only one purpose -- to prevent their terms of affection from being misconstrued.

"You see, just in a jest, Mr. Taylor called me 'Blessed Baby' -- it started at dinner parties we attended together. And just to tease him, I called him -- this great, big, stern-minded man -- 'Baby' in return. They were used in our letters, strictly in fun, and I feared, well, misunderstanding."

And this is the reason Mabel Normand, famous film star, told The Examiner yesterday that she sought so earnestly the missives exchanged between her and the slain motion-picture director, William Desmond Taylor, after the inquest Saturday.

But the letters and telegrams she refers to are strangely missing. Following the second burglary of the Taylor bungalow, at 404 B South Alvarado street, some weeks ago they were found undisturbed when Taylor showed Miss Normand about the ransacked rooms. They were then in the top drawer of the dresser.

"Our letters exchanged were mostly 'joshing' ones, frivolous and jesting about the trivialities we had come upon since our last meeting. Some were of more serious import explained why dinner engagements we had arranged had to be canceled," Miss Normand said yesterday.

"Most of the letters -- there were eight or nine of them -- were written when either he and I was in New York and sent from the Ritz-Carlton. One was when I was ill and told him the difficulty I had in purchasing certain types of golf balls he had requested me to purchase for him in the city.

"The telegrams, a half dozen of them, were of similar nature merely asking about the health of the other and telling him how I was enjoying the attractions in the metropolis.

"I seldom would sign my name, preferring to keep him guessing with a sketch of myself at the end of the letter. His calling me 'Blessed Baby' -- started at a dinner party -- and he said it, of course, with a laugh, but it seemed so inconsistent from that stern-typed man -- and I joshed him about it. Later, in the same laughing spirit, I called him by the equally inconsistent term "Baby" and we continued it. But since I have feared that it would be misconstrued -- that it would not appear to be as intended."

Then the famous picture star reverted in conversation to the night of the tragedy, when the director was slain a short time after he had escorted Miss Normand to her waiting automobile.

"There is a doubt yet in my mind but that the murderer was not in the house secreted during the time of my short visit with Mr. Taylor," she said. "I can't understand how he could have been brazen enough to have entered during the brief interim when Mr. Taylor came with me to the curbing.

"A mysterious part of it all was a telephone call he was receiving shortly before I visited his apartment to inquire about a book he was to lend me. He was helping me with my literary studies, you know, and treated me always with the courtesy of an adviser.

"My bell was answered by his colored servant, Henry Peavey, who told me Mr. Taylor was telephoning. Not wishing to eaves drop on a private conversation I told Peavey I would wait outside. When Mr. Taylor heard my voice he hurriedly cut off his phone call and rushed to meet me with:

"Oh, I know why you have come. It is for the book I was to lend you."

We talked for about three quarters of an hour -- it was just 7:45 that evening when I left him -- and then he told me that he had some checks to mail out. He said he would phone to me about 9 and see how I enjoyed the start of the book.

"Shortly before this, Peavey who had been finishing his work in the kitchen, nodded a 'good night,' stopped for a short conversation with my chauffeur and went on his way. After Mr. Taylor had helped me with my wraps he took me to my car, where we talked for a moment about a magazine I had purchased. I then drove away.

"My opinion is that Mr. Taylor was murdered for a motive of revenge, but just why someone would seek vengeance is beyond my comprehension. Never in his conversation with me had he spoken of any enmity between him and others. And I never should have suspected it, as he was the type that seemed to make of everyone a devoted friend.

"In my opinion Mr. Taylor was of irreproachable morals, a typical gentleman, who seemed incapable of stooping to things of the questionable or dishonorable sort. To me he was always a kindly adviser in my efforts at mental improvement and to all who knew him he was an inspiration to the nobler and loftier things of life.

"If there is a possibility that the jealousy of another woman enters into the mystery," Miss Normand continued, "I feel certain that the phone call which he was receiving as I entered his apartment had something to do with it.

"Whoever it was calling him¹⁹² seemed intensely absorbed in what he had to say. And the hasty cutting off of the conversation might have aroused antagonism in any one interested in Mr. Taylor in a sentimental way. Perhaps the announcement of his servant, Peavey, that I had come was overheard by the person at the other end of the wire. And perhaps -- who can tell -- that it was this person who imagined jealousy and outraged feelings and came immediately to the apartment and committed the venomous deed.

"I did not ask him who it was that called, for I felt it was none of my business. Then again, he was not the type of man who lets others in on what he considered his private affairs. He was very secretive -- almost seemed to place a barrier of mystery between him and his most intimate friends -- and it was this mystic quality that gave him such marked fascination.

"Of this much I am thoroughly convinced: It was a man, not a woman, who fired the shot that killed Taylor. I know the feminine sex and feel certain that a woman would have had to take more than one shot to have had as deadly an effect as the one that brought about his demise. Perhaps in three or four efforts she might have done it -- but not in one.

"The man who committed this deed was a sure shot and understood the gun game. He understood where to aim, and when -- an experienced gunman.

"As for the disappearance of my letters I cannot account. I know of absolutely no one who would be interested in them. They have no significance of anything except the harmless friendship that existed between us. When I saw Mr. Taylor was keeping them I asked him why. And I remember yet his kindly countenance when he smiled and said: "Oh -- just because."

"He often remonstrated with me because I did not write more frequently. But what I usually had to say was done over the phone or in his presence.

"I want everyone to know, however, that I am doing all I possibly can to aid in the solution of this tragic mystery," she concluded. "For Mr. Taylor was to me the very personification of kindness -- the sort of man that made it an honor to be called his friend."

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 6, 1922

Mystery Man Smiles As He Leaves House

by Don H. Eddy

A crashing report, suddenly stilled, rocked the early evening silence of a court at 400 South Alvarado street.

An arc light spluttered and hissed high above the center of the oblong, grassy court.

A shadow moved, swiftly, silently across a yellow square of light which marked a shaded window of 404 B, last of the three staring, white-fronted, two-storied residences on the northern side of the court.

A rectangle of light grew from a tiny crack on the concrete porch floor of 404B as a door was opened softly.

The shadow of a man fell athwart the light. A squarely built, stocky individual moved noiselessly to the edge of the porch. He stood immobile for an instant, gazing intently toward Alvarado street.

Swiftly, yet without appearance of unusual haste, he wheeled.

Back of him and a dozen feet away another glare of white light had fallen on the porch and steps of 404B. A door had been flung open. The figure of a woman was framed there.

For the space of a few rapid heart beats the man and the woman faced each other over the narrow reach of grass and concrete.

The distant arc light fell across the man's gray, plaid cap, shadowing his face.

Yet as the woman watched, he smiled.

Immediately he turned on his heel and walked back to the half-open door.

He went inside as to speak farewell. He closed the door quietly, normally. He walked across the porch and down two low steps.

He then had the choice of two paths. By one, he might have walked to Alvarado street and turned his back to the woman who still stood in the doorway of 406B.

He followed the walk and his figure faded into the murk of a space between the houses.

The woman slowly closed her door.

The arc light flickered and the lights burned on behind the drawn shades of 404B where another man lay dead.

This is not fiction.

The man who smiled was the human enigma who just had murdered William Desmond Taylor, famed motion picture director and soldier of fortune.

The woman who watched was Mrs. Douglas MacLean, winsome wife of the noted cinema star.

¹⁹² The person who spoke with Taylor on the phone was later identified as actor Antonio Moreno.

And I have tried to picture the scene as Mrs. MacLean made me see it during an interview yesterday. It was the first time she had given a detailed account of the sinister happenings of that night -- last Wednesday.

Mrs. MacLean doesn't look like a material witness. And she isn't -- from choice. Maybe she isn't at all. Because:

"I simply cannot describe him," she said. "I should say he was five feet nine inches tall, perhaps. It seemed to me he had a prominent nose, but that impression may be by reason of the shadow of the arc lamp.

"I hardly think it was the man Sands, whom I knew. It seemed to me he was not so heavy as Sands.

"I can only be sure of the gray plaid cap, and that his neck was muffled with something -- perhaps his coat collar. I can't even tell whether he wore an overcoat."

Yet the image of the man she saw -- the man who smiled while the body of his victim was still warm -- as it hazily impressed itself upon her mind, may send a suspect to the gallows -- or freedom.

It being impossible, at this stage of the investigation, to reconstruct the dramatic scene inside Taylor's home before the single sudden report which ended his life, this view of the MacLean home is of intense interest.

"We had just finished dinner. It was between 8 and 8:15 o'clock. Christina, the maid, was busy in the dining room. I had walked into the living room and was sitting here on the davenport knitting.

"Mr. MacLean had gone upstairs to get a little electric stove we sometimes used. It was a very chilly night -- extremely cold, in fact, for Los Angeles.

"Then came in the shattering report. It was muffled, but still it seemed to penetrate to every corner of the rooms.

"Christina paused in her work.

"'Oh!' she said, 'wasn't that a shot?'"

"I really didn't know. The court faces a hill and automobiles climbing the grade often backfire. It was just such a noise.

"'I'm sure it was a shot,'" the maid said.

"And so I rose, walked to the door and opened it. There were several lights in the living room, back of me. They reflected from the screen door. I pressed forward against the screen looking out into the dark.

"Then I saw the man.

"He was standing with his back almost entirely turned to me looking toward Alvarado street. He stood on the corner of Mr. Taylor's porch. The door of the Taylor home was open and the room inside was lighted.

"Almost on the instant I saw him the man turned and faced me.

"He did not seem surprised or startled, surely not alarmed. It was all done casually and I can't understand why I stood there and watched him.

"He smiled at me. I could see the corners of his mouth curl in the shadow of his cap. I could not see his face distinctly -- not well enough, that is, to distinguish his features.

"I thought Mr. Taylor must have called to him from inside the house.

"For the man turned away walked to the door and almost disappeared inside. It seemed he was bidding his host good-bye. It was all done in a moment.

"He closed the door. He didn't slam it, nor did he shut it with unusual softness. It was simply done in the way you or I or anyone would close a door.

"Then he walked across the porch, down the steps and turned toward me.

"Satisfied in my mind -- if there ever had been fear or even wonder there -- I started to draw back into the house.

"While I slowly, closed the door I saw him turn into the walk between the houses and disappear. It was very dark there. That walk leads to another street, where persons on the side of the court usually park their cars.

"And so I thought nothing of it -- absolutely nothing.

"I didn't even mention it to Mr. MacLean until the next morning when the terrible screams of Mr. Taylor's servant awakened us. Then I remembered the man.

"And still I cannot conceive that a murderer could act so naturally. It simply is beyond belief."

That is the story of Mrs. MacLean, the beautiful, cultured girl who married Douglas MacLean, eight years ago in New York, who has lead with him a life sans Hollywood midnight gaiety, who seeks only domestic happiness, who abhors publicity -- and who has been drawn into the greatest murder mystery of the year by a mocking little twirl of the wheel called Fate.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 6, 1922

"Mr. Taylor loved Miss Normand very much, but I do not believe that she returned his love to any great extent."

This is what Henry Peavey, Taylor's colored house servant, said early yesterday evening when questioned by reporters of The Times.

"I was in Mr. Taylor's house for almost six months," declared Peavey, "and I know that Mr. Taylor was very much in love with Miss Normand. At times I thought that she returned his love and then again it seemed to me that she was tired of him.

"One night almost a month before Mr. Taylor was killed Miss Normand came to the house for dinner. After dinner she went into the front room with Mr. Taylor and they were talking. I passed through the room and she stopped me. She told me then that she and Mr. Taylor were to be married. He was sitting there and didn't say a word. She wanted to know if I would work for them and I told her that I was afraid that I would be unable to please her. She stated that I was pleasing Mr. Taylor and that therefore I would please her.

"Miss Normand never came to the house very often. During the time worked there she was only in Mr. Taylor's home about a dozen times. She was there the night before the murder and again the night that Mr. Taylor was killed. I know that she was with Mr. Taylor on the Tuesday night, before the Wednesday that he was killed, because she told me so. Wednesday night when she came in Mr. Taylor asked her to have some pudding. She said while I was

in the room that she did not care for any pudding that night, but had enjoyed the pudding that she had the night before. Then I learned for the first time what had happened to some pudding that I had left in the ice box on Tuesday night and that was gone Wednesday morning when I arrived at the Taylor home.

"In my job as houseman I was in a position to know quite a bit about Mr. Taylor's business. He wrote a letter to Miss Normand almost every day of the week. His driver would take the notes to Miss Normand's home by automobile after breakfast in the mornings. A week never went by that he did not write to her at least three times.

"Mr. Taylor always sent Miss Normand flowers at least three times a week. He purchased the flowers from a wholesale place on Los Angeles street between Second and Third streets. Once I paid for some of them, the single bunch cost \$35. He would have the flowers sent out from the wholesale house direct.

"While Miss Normand was in New York finishing her last picture Mr. Taylor sent her a telegram every evening of his life. He would give them to me and I sent them on my way home. I always gave them to the same girl in the Western Union main office. She is still working there. Miss Normand answered his telegrams and almost every morning just after I arrived at the Taylor home the boy would come with Miss Normand's telegram. Mr. Taylor saved them all, but I don't know where he kept them.

"I remember one evening when Miss Normand was with Mr. Taylor in his home she saw his new music box and while I was in the room she asked him if they were going to have one like it when they were married. He told her that they would keep the one he had just purchased if she liked it.

"A year ago last Christmas Miss Normand gave Mr. Taylor a set of diamond shirt studs and diamond cuff links. Last Christmas she sent him a large silver cigarette case and a match holder and a cigarette holder. Some time after Christmas the match and cigarette holder disappeared, but he had the case on him the night that he died. I don't know what Mr. Taylor gave Miss Normand for Christmas, but I know that he was always sending her something or other.

"Mr. Taylor used to talk to Miss Normand over the telephone a great deal. He always asked me to get the number for him. Sometimes some one would answer me and when I said that Mr. Taylor wished to speak to Miss Normand they would hang up the telephone. It was then that I would believe that Miss Normand did not care for my master like he did for her.

"Only once during the time that I worked for Mr. Taylor did Miss Normand ask me about other girls. She stopped me once when she was in the home and ask me what other girls had dinner with Mr. Taylor. I told her that there was only one. She ask me who the one was and I told, Miss Normand. She laughed at me and said that Mr. Taylor had me well trained.

"Miss Normand was with Mr. Taylor the last time I saw him alive. My aster asked me to mix up some cocktails and I did. I placed the liquor in he shaker on a tray with two glasses and Mr. Taylor and Miss Normand were drinking when I left for the evening. They both said good night to me and I left the house. When I next saw Mr. Taylor he was dead on the floor of his living-room."¹⁹³

* from **Los Angeles Examiner**, February 7, 1922

No Girl Could Find Fault With Mr. Taylor's Attentions to Me, Declares Noted Film Actress

By W. W. Kane

"There can be no girl who was jealous of Mr. Taylor's attention to me. His attitude toward me was only that of a friend who fostered my interest in the better things of life -- music, painting and books.

"We never spoke of love, neither of us was interested in the other in that way. If there was a girl with whom he was infatuated it surely was someone else, not I."

Mabel Normand, famous motion picture star, ill from the persistent questioning by those who are seeking to find some one who might have taken the life of William Desmond Taylor in a spirit of a frenzied jealousy, vehemently denied yesterday any love element that existed between her and the slain director.

"Shortly after the inquest Saturday detectives investigating the case came to me and thanked me for my co-operation in aiding in the solving of this terrible tragedy," she said. "They told me they are thoroughly convinced it was an unfortunate coincidence that I was seen with him a short time before his murder.

"Everything that I know that might lead to detection of the murderer I have told them. And so no one would welcome the apprehension of the culprit that committed that foul deed more than I.

"There have been insinuations made that I went to Mr. Taylor's house after the Inquest Saturday to seek some of my letters to him. That is grossly erroneous. I went to the bungalow at the request of the detectives and in their company and solely for the purpose of showing to them the exact location of the furniture as it was placed in the room before I left. It was to show how disordered the place had become after the intrusion of the murderer.

"If Peavey, his colored servant, says that I had asked him about any girls that Mr. Taylor had ever been interested in, it is a venomous fabrication. Never in my life have I spoken to this man directly, and never have I talked to him in any way except in the presence of others, including Mr. Taylor. And as for the subject of girls -- the question never entered my mind."

Miss Normand, heavy-lidded from loss of sleep, and worn from the grueling inquisition and to which she has been subjected since the murder, reiterated that no one welcomed the apprehension of the culprit more than she.

As for the insinuations that Mr. Taylor had been an attendant on so-called "dope" parties, she added another vehement denial.

"He loved clean, simple, pleasures, not this sordid type," she said. "He was one of the most temperate men in his habits I have ever known.

"He sent me flowers, occasionally, yes. But it was only because he knew I loved them and like to have them in my house. But there never was an expression of love sent with them. He knew our friendship didn't extend to that -- it was purely platonic, and like that of an older man interested in a girl who sought mental improvement, and the things that better one in the cultural world."

¹⁹³ Peavey also later claimed that Mabel and Taylor were arguing at the time of her last visit with him, see *Los Angeles Record*, January 7, 1930.

* from *Los Angeles Record*, February 8, 1922

Body of Taylor Rests In Vault

In a mausoleum in Hollywood cemetery the body of William Desmond Taylor lay Wednesday shrouded in silence. The massed thousands that did him honor Tuesday were gone, only an occasional straggler crossing the green to point out curiously the place that sheltered the remains.

Not less than 10,000 persons, most of them women, surged about the doors of St. Paul's Cathedral on Olive street Tuesday in an effort to gain admittance. In the jam two women fainted and were carried away in machines.

Following the simple service of the church of England in which Dean William MacCormack officiated, the casket was moved to the church portico where friends were permitted to view the remains. It was here that Miss Mabel Normand, film star, crumpled in a faint.

Miss Normand entered the church attired in deep mourning, with a heavy veil over her face. Two women friends supported her. In a vestibule stood the huge bronze casket containing the murdered man's body. Miss Normand stood for a moment looking at the dead man's face. Then she moaned and tried to pull away from her friends to get nearer to the casket. As they supported her she fainted.¹⁹⁴ Even then she did not leave the church, but remained during the services, while tears streamed down her cheeks. After the ritual she had to be lifted to her feet and assisted from the church in a state of collapse.

Among the floral offerings heaped about the casket was a spray of pink roses bearing the card of Mary Miles Minter, noted film actress, who has admitted she loved Taylor, and a wreath of roses and lilies from Miss Normand.

Henry Peavey, Taylor's colored valet, sobbed aloud when he entered the church at noon and saw the flag-draped casket and the flower strewn desk of his beloved employer. He went down in a heap on the pew cushions, his body shaken with grief. J. J. Larkin, a white friend of years standing, sat beside him and tried to comfort him. Peavey sat silent through the service.

Motionless through the ceremony stood the Canadian guard of honor, backs to the flag-draped coffin and hands folded over gun-stocks.

A male quartet sang "Abide With Me." Dean MacCormack read the service, closing with the ritualistic prayer. The organ played a solemn march while the body was slowly borne from the church, accompanied by the members of the Motion Picture Directors' association and personal friends.

Passing massed thousands the procession moved toward the cemetery. The guard of honor was followed by the pipers playing a funeral march to the beat of a muffled drum.

At the cemetery Dean MacCormack read a prayer and the Canadians proceeded with a military funeral which closed with the sounding of taps.

* From *Chicago American*, February 8, 1922

"Wallace Smith

...Miss Normand's collapse at the coffin of Taylor was a dramatic one. It came after the crowd outside had struggled for hours with the police to gain admission to the church or to view so some of the great stars of the screen who were expected to appear. Many of them had spoken words of praise for the murdered director and had vowed their friendship. But few appeared and these retired to the background.

Miss Normand, dressed in black, with a white lace collar on her frock and accompanied by her maid and a woman friend, was escorted through the crowd by a detective. All through the services in St. Paul's Pro-Cathedral Church she sat in a forward pew near the casket. She was swept backward in the swirl of the crowd toward the doorway following the services. In the vestibule of the church was the coffin, with its guard of Canadian soldiers. As Miss Normand and her attendants reached the coffin, the maid and the other woman grasped her arms as if to keep her from going any nearer.

The little actress strained against their retaining hold and almost dragged them to the side of the casket, where she might be able once more to behold the features of the man to whom she was once reported engaged. For a moment she bent over the coffin. Then with a little moan, she collapsed and a minute later was sobbing hysterically. She was taken into another of the pews until she had recovered herself sufficiently to make her way to her motor.

Among those whose cards were found among the flowers were Ethel Daisy Taylor daughter of the slain director; Charles Ray, Al Christie, Lila Lee, Thomas M. Ince[sic], Mack Sennett, Antonio Moreno, Constance Talmadge, Charles Chaplin, Douglas MacLean, Betty Compson, Mary Miles Minter and Claire Windsor.

* from *Daily Mirror* [New York], February 8, 1922

An alleged interview with Harry Peavey, servant to Mr. W.D. Taylor, the murdered cinema director, is published in the *Los Angeles Times* (says Reuter), in which Peavey is stated to have said Mr. Taylor was much in love with Miss Mabel Normand, the cinema actress.

"Mr. Taylor used to write her nearly every day, sending letters by his chauffeur, while he also sent her flowers three times a week, said Peavey.

He added that Miss Normand told him a month before the murder that she and Mr. Taylor were to be married.

* from *Detroit News*, February 9, 1922

Magazines devoted to motion picture plays and players do a great deal of harm by nauseating drivel that they print. The silly prattle that is put into the mouths of screen players who are "interviewed" for these magazines and then pen pictures drawn of them are beyond reason. Rex Ingram, a scholar, is not given any better "boost" than a

¹⁹⁴ Mabel later denied that she actually fainted. Perhaps she did collapse emotionally, so to speak, but this does not necessarily mean that she fainted; which implies that she was rendered unconscious.

former salesgirl who has suddenly become a headliner. The same superlatives that are used to discuss Ingram are used to describe the brainless cutie whose face is her fortune and whose brain is still in the kindergarten age.

It is a long jump from paperbound novels and chewing gum to Plato and Thoreau, but the facile writer of the screen monthlies blithely makes this leap. It must have been with pain and anguish that the screen fans read how Mabel Normand, pictured as a devotee of Voltaire and Nietzsche, testified that on her way to William Taylor's house on the fatal night she stopped at a newsstand to buy a bag of peanuts and a copy of the Police Gazette.

* from *Los Angeles Evening Express*, February 9, 1922

Mabel Normand Evades Questions on Letters

By Estelle Lawton Lindsey

Mabel Normand was behind drawn blinds this morning.

According to her maid she is ill after a sleepless night and will be unable to see any one.

According to J. A. Waldron, general manager of the Mack Sennett productions, she is going to work all day and will not be permitted to see anybody or to make further statements concerning her letters found in a boot in the house of William Desmond Taylor.

"Miss Normand is wholly content to have her letters in the hands of the authorities," said Mr. Waldron. "She thinks they are in safe hands."

The moisture from the vine-covered pergola in front of Mabel Normand's apartment was dripping down on my hat and the maid was holding the door slightly ajar as we talked.

I'd been ringing the bell some minutes before a big automobile drove up and stopped in front of the door, but for all the response my ringing brought I might have been ringing the bell of an Egyptian tomb.

Every abode in the house was down and not a sound came from the star's house, and so I saw Miss Normand's manager, whom I had met in her house, approaching.

"Good morning," I greeted as Mr. Waldron came up the steps.

There was no response, and the impersonal gaze of the manager seemed to embrace my form in the general plan of the architecture.

"I met you here the other morning," I continued, no way discouraged by his frigidity.

Silence.

The manager walked to the door and poked the bell in some kind of occult way and the door flew open. Between the maid and he was the stolid back of the manager, with the drops of moisture standing out on his woolly overcoat. The maid [Mamie Owens] smiled into my eyes and then gasped.

"Dear, I'm so sorry," she began. "Miss Normand ain't up yet. She's awful sick and just this minute gone to sleep."

"When do you think she will get up?" I inquired.

"Oh, I don't know. She's all worn out and she's been terrible sick all night."

The manager had walked in and he now "discovered" me.

"Miss Normand can't see anybody today. She's going to the studio and will work all day. I'm her manager."

"So she told me when she introduced you the other morning. I only wish to see Miss Normand a moment."

"Well, she's going to the studio right now. I've come for her."

"Didn't you just hear the girl tell me that she is sick and asleep?" I inquired blandly.

"Well, I'm going to take her when she wakes up. You people have worn the girl out."

"I'm sorry, but Miss Normand may want to say something about those letters."

"No she won't. She has said all she has had to say. She has told all she knows. She can't work and she can't rest."

"Since you are speaking for the lady, can you tell me if she has any idea who hid the letters in the boot and whether any of them were extracted before they were hidden? News is news you know."

"She knows nothing about that, and if anybody wants to see her in the future they will have to see me."

At this point the drip got to be a flood and I stepped inside the door.

Everything was quiet as the tomb and you could hear the clock tick in the next room.

Wonder whether Mabel Normand will work today -- at the studio.

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, February 9, 1922

"Mabel Normand had but one affair of the heart that could really be called a love affair."

That was the statement made today to newspapermen by Miss Julie Courtell, former social secretary and intimate associate of the film star, who was located at Oakland, where she went after deciding to leave the motion pictures and take a position as manager of a branch of a San Francisco automobile concern.

"Miss Normand's real love was the man with whom she first began her work in the movies years ago. Each was merely a struggling extra, but gradually both rose to enviable positions," continued Miss Courtell.

"I believe that the man still cares for her, but the atmosphere of the movie world in which she lives has, I think, spoiled Mabel's capacity for caring ardently and sincerely for any one man. She has said that to me herself."

Miss Courtell then went on to tell about her relations with Miss Normand. The former secretary was once a motion picture actress herself and gave up that profession to take charge of Miss Normand's interests.

During the years that followed, Miss Courtell declared that a ripe friendship was formed between them and they frequently exchanged many intimacies.

Miss Courtell left Miss Normand and the motion picture colony during the war to enter the motor corps service in France. On her return, she abandoned the pictures for good as, she said, the life displeased her. When first approached for an interview she was loath to speak of Miss Normand for fear, she said, that she would make some revelation that would injure her former employer.

Miss Courtell also maintained that Miss Normand's acquaintanceship with Taylor might be misconstrued, qualifying her statement by saying:

"She is of an impulsive and unrestrained nature and as frankly affectionate as a little boy. If she were to meet Charlie Chaplin or any other old friend right in the middle of Broadway, New York, the fact of the meet so far from Hollywood, would be sufficient occasion for her to rush up, throw her arms about him, and kiss him.

"Miss Normand was highly conscious of the lack of the higher things in the life of the average dweller in the movie colony and has constantly sought for her own intellectual improvement ever since I have known her.

"Doubtless she found some response to these aspirations in a man like Taylor must have been. A counter current in her life, constantly keeping her from becoming the accomplished person she desires to be, is in the habits formed during the years of her residence in the movie colony.

"The loose associations, the easy money, the frothiness of life in the movie colony do not make for intellectual or real artistic development."

* from *Austin American*, February 10, 1922

Mabel Normand has a copy of The Police Gazette in her car the night she called on Director Taylor, just before he was killed. And that's the first time we ever heard of a Police Gazette being anywhere except in a barber shop.

* from *Chicago American*, February 11, 1922

" Wallace Smith,

....This startling information and this amazing theory were in the hands of district attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine today after he had summoned Mabel Normand, moving picture star, to his office despite her physician's orders and after he had questioned her for more than three hours.

It was midnight before the prosecutor had finished questioning her about the life and death of the eccentric director to whom she was once reported engaged, to whom she wrote the "blessed baby" letters and in whose study she visited but few minutes before the slaying. She was obviously weary when she at least came from the prosecutor's offices, surrounded by a squad of detectives. She wore a henna sport suit with wide cuffs and collar of gray angora. On her head was crushed a mannish brown fedora. She stood with her hands in her coat pockets and her feet pigeon-toed in a typically Mabel Normand manner when newspapermen asked her for an interview.

"I've told the district attorney everything I know," she said, and her voice broke harshly as if she had spoken much.

"I'm trying to help him."

A photographer's flash light boomed. She jumped.

"Oh, my Gawd," cried the film star and hurried away to her car surrounded by her escort.

Nor would Prosecutor Woolwine divulge what had been told him. He chose to keep secret the sensational development of the eastern dope ring and its machinations, even after other sources had disclosed it to The Chicago Evening American.

It was known, however, that the tale had been revealed to him by a moving picture actor and a director after they had been found by the district attorney's men in Culver City. It was known, too, that their revelation was made but an hour or two before Miss Normand was ordered to the district attorney's office.

"The case certainly is a blind alley," declared Mr. Woolwine. "I think Miss Normand is doing everything she can to help. Of course, I've been badly fooled before, but believe in what she has had to say. I could say a lot of things -- that have come into my head -- but it is better to wait."

...Just before Miss Normand went into the district attorney's office her manager gave the following written statement to the press:

"No one will ever know how I regret this terrible tragedy. I have told truthfully everything I know and am very sorry, indeed, I cannot offer any solution whatever as to the motive which prompted the terrible deed. I have satisfied the Los Angeles authorities, both police and district attorney's office, that I know nothing about the murder and have offered my services or a statement at any time I may be called to help apprehend the assassin.

"The handkerchief and gown found in Mr. Taylor's apartment have been identified as other than mine. It has been established that I was not in love with Taylor, that he escorted me to my car that evening and waited until I drove away, when we waved good-by to each other.

"Please tell the public that I know nothing about this terrible happening and that Mr. Taylor and I did not quarrel."

Even earlier than that, in a boudoir interview, she had dwelt at some length on the happenings of her visit to Taylor's home in an interview with a volunteer investigator. During the interview she produced two books that

Taylor had given her -- one on the Russian ballet and one on period costumes -- and protested that she was familiar with Freud and Nietzsche before she knew the director.

"I did not quarrel with Mr. Taylor," she declared. "Why, he put his arms around me as we walked to the car together. They try to place a great deal of importance upon these letters of mine, but, really, they were just personal, joking sort of things.

"He'd write me little, funny notes, and I'd reply in the same vein. Sometimes I'd draw in a little daffydil, you know, like Tad draws, or a comical sketch of myself. That's all they were.

"They have said so many things. I was not engaged to marry him, and I was not out with him New Year's Eve. I was not even in the same hotel with him."

She repeated the story of how she had gone downtown to a jeweler's shop and, finding it closed, had bought a sack of peanuts and a copy of the Police Gazette before driving to Taylor's home. She pictured Taylor in the height of spirits, amiable and joking, as she talked with him in his study.

Although obviously nervous and noticeably hoarse after the Woolwine interview, Miss Normand seemed to have recovered splendidly since the day she collapsed at the side of Taylor's coffin in the cathedral, where his funeral service was spoken.

* from *Los Angeles Record*, February 11, 1922

'My Own Story' By Mabel Normand

(United Press) This is my own story of just what happened on the night of my last visit to William D. Taylor, the evening of February 1.

In response to a telephone call at my home during the afternoon of the day he was killed I stopped at his house between 7 and 7:15 in the evening.

The purpose of my call was to pick up a book which Mr. Taylor had purchased for me that afternoon, knowing particularly that I wanted it. He had already sent one book to my home but had requested me to stop for this one, which I assumed he had purchased later.

Upon my arrival I was let in by Henry Peavey, Taylor's valet, who informed me Mr. Taylor was conversing with someone over the phone. In a few moments after my arrival Mr. Taylor said good-bye to the party with whom he was conversing and left the telephone.

He greeted me. He had just finished dinner and his man had cleared away the table but he asked me if I would not let him have something prepared for me or go out to dinner with him later. I declined, explaining that I was tired and that I had an early studio call to make the next morning.

I said that I intended to go home early, have dinner and go to bed. For 25 minutes Mr. Taylor and I sat discussing various books and photoplays.

About 20 minutes to eight, I prepared to start for home. Mr. Taylor walked with me to where my car was parked at the curbing.

There was a copy of the "Police Gazette" in the car which he noticed. He chided me for having it in my possession, remarking that Freud, Haeckel and Nietz[s]che were hardly compatible with such literature.

After an exchange of repartee for a few minutes, I finally bade him good night and directed my chauffeur to drive me home.

Before I left, Mr. Taylor promised to phone me at my home within one hour. He never did.

As William (my chauffeur) pulled away from the curb I looked back and saw Mr. Taylor standing there, gazing after me, I waved my hand.

That was the last time I ever saw Mr. Taylor alive.

Within a few minutes I was at my home. I retired, having dinner served to me in bed about 8:15.

The first knowledge I had of Mr. Taylor's death was written when Edna Purviance phoned me the following morning about 7:30. She told me that Mr. Taylor's valet had been seen rushing from Mr. Taylor's home, screaming that his master was dead.

I have no idea who killed Mr. Taylor or what was the reason for his death.

I would only be to proud to announce the fact had I been engaged to Mr. Taylor, but such a statement would not be true.

I held Mr. Taylor in highest esteem, regarding him as a very learned, cultured gentleman, with whom any woman might be pleased to associate.

Mr. Taylor and I had much in common and during the long period of our friendship I had made a study of the French language and philosophy in which I had been interested for some time. I am also interested in these things now.

So far as revealing the contents of any letters written by Mr. Taylor to me or by me to Mr. Taylor is concerned I have no reason to fear any consequences which might result from such disclosures except the natural embarrassment of having personal correspondence revealed to the public gaze.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 11, 1922

First Detailed Story By Mabel Normand; 'All That I Know'

By Walter Vogdes

Mabel Normand sat in her bungalow court apartment, 3089 West Seventh street, yesterday afternoon and for two hours went over in detail the story of her friendship for Taylor, of her last visit to his house on the night of the murder, and of the famous "Blessed Baby" letters which Miss Normand and Taylor wrote to each other.

She discussed the general tone of the letters and recited a number of them in detail from memory. She went over the conversation she had had with Taylor a few moments before he was murdered, giving every sentence, she declared, that passed between them.

Miss Normand rose from a sick bed to grant the interview. For two days she has been on the verge of collapse.

She talked to an Examiner reporter, nevertheless, against the advice of her business manager who feared for her physical condition.

"You'll not see the Mabel Normand you know on the screen," said her manager, MacArthur, while we were waiting for her to appear. "This terrible case has played havoc with her nerves."

The film star appeared in negligee, her hair down her back in school girls braids. Her face was pale and her voice trembled with emotion when she mentioned Taylor.

"I will talk freely to you, I will tell you everything I know about this terrible," she said in starting. "And I ask only one thing in return. Print truthfully what I say. So much that is untrue has been printed about me."

"There is no secret about any phase of my relations with Mr. Taylor. My letters to him -- I would gladly set them before the world if the authorities care to do that. I have nothing to conceal.

"I knew Mr. Taylor had letters of mine. Once several weeks before he was murdered I saw them in a drawer of his desk. I remonstrated with him. 'Why do you save my letters, Billy?' I asked. 'There's nothing in them.' He merely smiled in answer.

"I have been charged with trying to recover those letters; with trying to conceal them. That is silly. If those letters are printed you will see that they are most of them casual; they express the jesting spirit that characterized our relations. We teased each other and made fun of each other a great deal. We did that continually on the night he was murdered, when I dropped in for a few minutes to see him."

As for the letters, she said, he would write her:

"Dear Mabel: I know you're an awfully busy woman and haven't much time to grant a poor duffer like me, but -- how about dinner together next Wednesday and then the Orpheum?"

"Yours always,
"Billy."

And on one occasion she said she answered:

"Dear Desperate Desmond:

"Sorry I cannot dine with you tomorrow. But I have a previous engagement with a Hindoo Prince. Some other time."

"Then," she said, "I would sign the letter with a little sketch of myself, or by drawing a 'daffodil.' You know the daffodils, those funny little comic figures."

"Or he would write to me about books. I just want to show you some of the books he gave me."

Miss Normand rose and picked up a costly illustrated volume descriptive of the Russian Ballet. Then another large book describing dress throughout the ages.

"I should like to deny a number of things that have been charged against me," said Miss Normand.

"First, that I had told some one that I expected to marry Mr. Taylor. I never said that. Secondly, that I was with him on New Year's Eve at the Ambassador Hotel and that we quarreled afterward.

"On New Year's Eve I was at the Alexandria hotel with Mr. and Mrs. Mahlon Hamilton. I did not see Mr. Taylor that night."

"Did you quarrel with him on any other night after returning from a party or from dinner? And did he return any jewels to you?"

"I never quarreled with him and he did not return any jewelry to me.

"Then there's the story of the night dress found in Mr. Taylor's apartment. It is cruel for any one to insinuate that it belonged to me. The initials which I understand were found on it, refute that. The night of Mr. Taylor's death was the only time I was ever alone with him in his house.

"It has been said that check stubs found on Mr. Taylor's desk and the fact that he had drawn some money from the bank just before he was killed would indicate that perhaps someone was trying to blackmail him. I don't believe it. He had his check book out that night and was going over his checks for one reason only.

"Ever since Sands, his former butler, had forged his name Mr. Taylor had examined every check that came in carefully. He told me that he could hardly tell Sand's forgeries from his own signatures, and he was afraid that the swindling was going on all along.

"On the night of the murder, contrary to what has been said, he was in excellent spirits. During the time that I was with him I heard no sound that would indicate that any one was in hiding in the house, anyone who might have stepped out and killed him after I left. But I will go back to the first part of that story of our last evening and give it to you all in detail.

"In the afternoon I went to a jewelry store to have initials placed on a vanity bag of mine. Then I went to the bank to deposit some checks. I'm rather careless about money, and sometimes I let my checks accumulate $\frac{3}{4}$ don't deposit them each week. It was so in this case.

"At the bank I phoned home to my maid, who told me that Mr. Taylor had called up. She said he mentioned having a book for me. I left the bank, bought 50 cents worth of peanuts from a man on the corner, several magazines and stepped into my limousine.

"I then directed William, my chauffeur, to drive to Mr. Taylor's home. I arrived, went up on the porch, and the door was opened by Mr. Taylor's valet, Henry Peavey. I saw Taylor inside talking on the phone, and when Henry asked me to step in, I refrained because I didn't want to eavesdrop on his conversation.

"Then Henry went inside and told Mr. Taylor I was there. At once he said good-by, hung up the phone and came forward to greet me."

"I know why you're here," he said. "'You haven't come to see me at all; you've just come after that book!'"

"The book was 'Rosmundy,' by Ethel M. Dell. It was not a copy of one of Freud's works as has been said. I read Freud and Nietzsche long before I met Mr. Taylor.

"For some time Mr. Taylor and I spoofed each other in our usual way, while Henry worked about the back part of the house. I looked about and said, 'This place has changed since I saw it last. I see you have both a piano and Victrola now. My, you're getting all together too rich.'

"Then we discussed books. We discussed 'Three Soldiers,' a book that Chicago newspaper man, John Dos Passos. He had read it only recently and was much interested. And several other new books came into the discussion.

"When Henry Peavey entered I stared at him in amusement. I stared at his curious attire. He wore green golf stockings, yellow knickers and a dark coat. He left by the front door, smiling broadly and saying good night to me and Mr. Taylor. The way he said it -- he's a funny colored boy with lots of mannerisms -- made me smile.

"When Henry had gone I said, 'Why don't you get him a set of golf sticks? Then he'd be all set up.'

"Mr. Taylor's face grew serious then and he discussed Henry at some length, telling me how Henry had been arrested a short time before and how he had gone down to see the judge about the vagrancy charge. And how he had put up a bond of \$200 to secure Henry's release.

"Then the talk turned on dinner and Mr. Taylor tried to persuade me to stay, saying that he had my favorite dessert -- rice pudding. But I declined, for I had to work the next morning and it is my custom to retire early whenever I have work ahead.

"So we started for the door. As we stepped out on the porch and walked down the pathway toward my car, he put his arm about me. At the car he saw the magazines I had bought. One magazine was the Police Gazette and he

started to tease me about it. I told him that I had bought it with a number of other illustrated magazines simply to look over the pictures.

"His parting remark was about calling me up an hour later concerning the book he had given me. He was curious about whether I would like it.

"He waved good-by and I saw him start back toward the house. The next morning Edna Purviance called up and told me that he was dead.

"And that is all that I know. That is all I can tell District Attorney Woolwine or any other of the authorities if they call me before them."

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 11, 1922

Star Talks Freely To Prosecutor

Following a three hour interrogation of Mabel Normand last night by District Attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine and Chief Deputy District Attorney W. C. Doran, the following statement was given out at 10:30 by A. MacArthur, manager of Miss Normand, with Miss Normand's name signed to it.

"No one will ever know how I regret the terrible tragedy. I have told truthfully everything I know and am sorry indeed. I cannot offer any solution whatever as to the motive which prompted this terrible deed. I have satisfied the Los Angeles authorities, both police and district attorney's office, that I know nothing about the murder and have offered my services or a statement at any time I may be called to help apprehend the assassin.

"The handkerchief and gown found in Mr. Taylor's apartment have been identified as other than mine. It has been established that I was not in love with Mr. Taylor, that he escorted me to my car that evening and chatted with me until I drove away, when we waved good-by to each other.

"Please tell the public that I know absolutely nothing about this terrible happening and that Mr. Taylor and I did not quarrel."

(signed) "Mabel Normand"

Emerging at 11:30 last night from District Attorney Woolwine's inner office at the close of a four hour interrogation of Mabel Normand, Detective Sergeants Cato, Murphy, Cahill and Winn brought with them a cap which they said may prove to be that of the man seen near the home of William D. Taylor by Mrs. Douglas MacLean.

This cap, regarded by the detectives as important enough to be taken by them into the conference with Miss Normand, was worn by a man arrested in the afternoon on East Fourth street by Detective Roberds [sic] and Lloyd. He gave the name of Walter Thiele and is held at the city jail on suspicion of burglary committed the night of the Taylor murder and for carrying a revolver.

On the visor of the cap is a bloodstain. The cap itself is khaki color, with distinct seams that might cause it to be mistaken for a plaid at night.

Mabel Normand's interrogation began at 7:30 and did not end till 11:30 and was continuous except for an occasional short respite. Woolwine and Chief Doran did the questioning with Ben Smith, the official stenographer, making a complete record of the interview.

The District Attorney stated later that Miss Normand had talked freely, with evident desire to do anything that she could to help solve the mystery of the murder of the famous motion picture director. He added that while much had been developed that when correlated with other information might prove important, he and Doran had obtained nothing new that seemed to bear directly on the central facts of the crime.

Miss Normand, after the questioning, talked to reporters for a few minutes.

"I feel so relieved now that I have told my story -- everything -- to the District Attorney. I know by the expression on Mr. Woolwine's face and his kindly smile as I left that he has placed me absolutely in the clear."

"I told him everything from the time I entered Mr. Taylor's apartment to get the book he was to lend me until the moment I left him at the curb and waved good-bye. He has heard my story and he smiled convincingly at its conclusion."

As she walked down the corridor garbed in an attractive dark red suit of the latest pattern her step was light and her manner confident and cheerful.

"I'm so tired, so very tired," the film star said to her chauffeur as she and her companions stepped into her limousine.

"Please drive us back to the house so I can get some rest after this ordeal."

"Just tell them I know the district attorney has placed me in the 'clear,'" she called over her shoulder to a newspaperman who pressed her for an interview.

"Tell them I have offered to be the first one to help in tracing down this fiendish assassin and that I hope he is caught and punished."

And as the automobile of Mabel Normand sped on the district attorney had this to say:

"I believe that little girl has told me everything she knows about this case and she's giving us every bit of aid she can."

This followed a day during which Miss Normand's physicians had declared that she was not equal to the strain of an official interrogation. Then Woolwine himself had a telephone conversation with Miss Normand shortly before 7 o'clock. Anxious to avoid the crowd that would be attracted by a day-time visit to the district-attorney's office, the film actress decided to brave the ordeal and promised to come to the Hall of Records at once.

"Even after talking to all these people about the Taylor case, I have been unable to gather one bit of evidence that would produce a clew," declared Woolwine at midnight, after the conference.

"Miss Normand talked freely and for a long while we discussed the case informally. She is a very bright girl and seemed perfectly willing to help in running down the person who killed Taylor. She says she is as much interested in solving the murder as we are.

"There was sincerity in her tone when she made her statement in the presence of a shorthand expert.

"Of all the baffling murders we have in recent years this is the most puzzling I have encountered in my career.

"That Elwell murder in New York has many characteristics of this one. We haven't found one clew yet that will assist in tracing the murderer.

"Sands? Of course, I want to talk to him.

"All the persons questioned so far have not given a clew -- none whatever!

"I suspect no one yet; have eliminated none."

From the long range of time during which the famous motion picture actress remained closeted with the investigators it was evident that not only was the narrative of her last visit with Taylor and the farewell at the curb being pieced together, but that also Miss Normand was being required to recall everything within her knowledge to the smallest detailing that might throw light on Taylor's murder within ten minutes after he had bid her a laughing good-night.

All the circumstances connected with this night interrogation of the famous film star whose visit to Taylor's home so shortly before an assassin shot him down has made her a central figure in the mystery case, indicate the tremendous importance attached by Woolwine and Doran to the information she could contribute. From the moment the District Attorney took charge of the investigation he had been waiting for story.

The actress arrived at the Broadway entrance to the Hall of Records at 7:30 o'clock. She was bundled in furs and accompanied by A. MacArthur, her manager and publicity agent, and her nurse. Between these two supported by them, she entered the Hall of Records.

Woolwine and Detective Sergeants Cahill, Winn and Murphy met Miss Normand just inside the door and escorted her to Woolwine's office on the eleventh floor, where Doran and Ben Smith were waiting. The door closed behind them and no hint came to those waiting outside in the corridors whether the story Miss Normand was telling was pregnant with clues that might lead to the apprehension of the murderer or would leave the tragic death of her friend as much a mystery as ever.

Shortly before 11 o'clock. Woolwine came from his inner office for a few minutes during which Miss Normand was being permitted to rest from the incessant questioning. He stated to reporters that the actress had talked freely and had shown an eagerness to co-operate in every way possible with his office, and had declared that she wanted above everything else to have the mystery solved.

Asked if he had secured any information that bore directly on the murder Woolwine replied:

"Well, everybody gets fooled sometimes. I do not know yet quite what I have got; all this information must be correlated before we know how important it is."

To a question as to whether he had obtained from Miss Normand information apparently related to the murder itself which had not been printed. Woolwine answered:

"We have talked of many apparently irrelevant things not published in the newspapers, but up to this time I have gotten nothing not published that pertains directly with the murder."

Shortly after Woolwine went back into his inner office to resume the interrogation, William Davis, Miss Normand's chauffeur, was brought upstairs and ushered into that office. He was questioned by Woolwine and Doran in the presence of Miss Normand.

MacArthur, the manager, told reporters that Miss Normand had been receiving about a hundred letters a day since the death of Taylor.

Most of them were from friends and admirers, expressing their deepest sympathy, but a few each day were abusive from cranks. He said that Miss Normand had consented shortly before 7 o'clock last evening in a telephone conversation with Woolwine to come to his office at once for the interview, she being glad to make the visit at night and avoid the crowds of the curious.

Meanwhile, during the day, a new witness had been found.

"Yes, the man wore a plaid cap and a muffler."

A woman other than Mrs. Douglas MacLean saw the mystery man in the William D. Taylor case, it developed yesterday -- saw him just before the murder while watching the film director and Mabel Normand.

This woman, a nurse, was walking south on Alvarado street about 7:30 o'clock on the evening of February 1.

She recognized Mabel Normand from her pictures. She did not know Taylor, but has since satisfied herself that he was the man in this sidewalk conversation.

She passed them. A few feet farther on she saw a man standing behind a clump of brush.

The man was not more than thirty feet from the couple and appeared to be watching them intently.

"How was he dressed?" asked the police detectives of this newest, and until yesterday, unrevealed witness.

"I remember distinctly the plaid cap and muffler," she said.

"Would you be able to recognize him should you see him again?"

"I would."

This testimony, regarded as more intimate than any yet issuing from the sterile ground of facts in this case has not been vouchsafed by this woman heretofore because, as she excused herself, she "did not know it was important."

Nevertheless, it is considered vital in this, that it practically dismisses from consideration the idea that the murderer -- if this man of the muffler were he -- entered the apartment while Taylor and Miss Normand were in conversation.

Hence, upon the basis of this new story the structural material of the crime must be rearranged and the murderer, in the revised version, is discovered entering after Miss Normand.

The fact that the man was lost to all other impressions in the concentration which he gave to the director and the actress particularly struck the nurse when in revisioning the scene, the fact dawned upon her that what she had witnessed might be important.

She did not wait to see how this triangle should resolve itself, did not even suspect at the time that the basis for a tragedy was then being laid.

If a suspect should be captured it is now apparent that his fate would be decided by Mrs. MacLean and the nurse who, in her evening stroll came upon a man whom she might have touched with her hand, so near she came to him, and for whom a nation is now searching.

Her description did not fit that of Edward F. Sands, discharged valet and handy man of the director.

However, District Attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine yesterday was forced to admit that "there is not a single scrap of evidence directing suspicion to any one person."

"I have no idea who the murderer was," said the District Attorney, "and therefore I cannot figure out what the motive was.

"We are up against a stone wall. It is more baffling even than the Fay Sudo case. There are fewer bits of evidence upon which to get a start than in any case with which I have not been connected."

Although Mr. Woolwine did not disclose his plan which, it appears, is being worked out according to a well formulated system, this was noticed:

He will reserve the "big ones" in this inquiry until the last.

The investigation is proceeding in an ordinary manner, carrying it facts and a ground teeming with "solutions" -- and will marshal them at last against -- against whom?

In fact, the District Attorney called no witnesses yesterday. In the morning he drove out to the apartment occupied by Taylor at 404-B South Alvarado street, accompanied by E. C. Jessurum, the owner; W. C. Doran, Chief Deputy District Attorney, and Walter Fischer, his chauffeur.

Mr. Jessurum was the first person to enter the house after the discovery of the body by Henry Peavey, Taylor's colored valet.

In order to have a picture of that setting, with the fidelity of detail maintained, the District Attorney secured from Mr. Jessurum a description of the scene as he had observed it.

Jessurum placed Fischer on his back on the floor, with feet towards the front door, with the corner of the rug there turned back on one foot. The landlord straightened out the chauffeur's arms by his sides, but he spread his legs slightly apart, as they had found Taylor lying. The chair in which Taylor sat as he talked to Miss Normand, Jessurum placed over one leg, with its two front legs between Fischer's and its back towards the wall.

"That is the way the body lay, just like that," said the landlord. He and others present who had hurried to the apartment when the valet, Henry Peavey, ran out shouting that Mr. Taylor was dead, advanced a theory as to what had happened in that room of death. They believe that the slayer entered the apartment while the famous director was chatting with Miss Normand after escorting her to her automobile. They picture him in their minds waiting, crouched on a tabouret by the wall, where he would be screened by the door when Taylor should push it open to re-enter.

They believe that Taylor came in totally unconscious of his peril, and that the assassin lunged toward him, shooting upward from his crouching position...

...it was learned that he had been bartering with a salesman for diamonds upon which a price of \$3000 had been set. The director, it is said, decided not to buy the jewels.

It was this negotiation, it is assumed, which accounted for the withdrawal of \$2500 by Taylor on January 31 and the redepositing of this sum on February 1.

In other words, he withdrew the money to be paid to the salesman and put it back when the deal fell through.

It was reported yesterday from the District Attorney's office that Mabel Normand's letters to Taylor, missing so long and reappearing so mysteriously, had been read and re-read, but that they "contained no facts or suggestion of a fact in the least helpful in the present investigation."

Mr. Woolwine has all these letters as well as other documents in the case stowed away in a safe and, he said yesterday, "for the present I intend to retain possession of them."

By another official who had read them it was stated that they were not the burning missives which had been imagined in certain quarters but were rather "the expression of a platonic friendship."

The District Attorney will resume the investigation today and, it is understood, will summon a number of witnesses.

Among those scheduled for early interrogation are two chauffeurs -- Miss Normand's and Taylor's.

The latter, Ed Fowler, knew Sands and his statement is desired for any light it may throw upon the missing ex-secretary of the murdered man.

Miss Normand was driven to the director's home on the evening of February 1 by her chauffeur. In the single statement given by him he has corroborated events forming one of the last chapters in Taylor's life.

Mr. Woolwine, however, desires to have him enter into a description of those events he witnessed with the greatest possible detail, for it is now realized that this mystery may be solved through the agency of "proofs light as air."

* from **Daily Mirror** [New York], February 11, 1922

Los Angeles, Friday -- Miss Mabel Normand, the cinema star, is reported to have admitted to detectives who are investigating the murder of Captain W. Desmond Taylor, the film producer, that she called upon him in an endeavor to secure the return of personal correspondence, but Taylor told her the letters had already been posted to her. The police, however, found the letters hidden in a pair of riding boots.

They state that a man prominent in the cinema world who was reported to be jealous of Taylor had been questioned concerning a report that he also had demanded Miss Normand's letters.

* from **San Francisco Bulletin**, February 13, 1922

"Walter Anthony

But Mack Sennett denied himself the luxury of an interview, and his Japanese servant informed snoop newspaper folk that the producer, under whose direction and contract Mabel Normand is appearing, was sick in bed and had been sick for two weeks.

There seems to have been a "jinx" on the "comedy king's" production of "Molly O" with Miss Normand as a star. Just at the time when the story had reached the pageant scene of festive gaiety, Jack Mulhall's wife committed suicide and the soul of the gallant Jack was depressed and his heart torn. Participation in episodes of hilarity was repulsive to his state of mind and the result was measurably reflected on the screen.

Then came the Arbuckle mess, one of the principal figures of which was Lowell Sherman, who, by singular coincidence, was shown in an episode in the picture in much the same light that Arbuckle was appearing in under the accusations that led to his arrest. Not only did the Arbuckle case itself hurt the picture, but through Sherman's participation it became so unpleasantly personal that the producer had to suppress the episode, ignore Sherman's name in his publicity and remove it from the personnel of the cast.

Then came the divided judgments of New York's critic's in which the verdict was about 30 per cent favorable to 70 per cent unfavorable; and now comes the Taylor scandal itself with the Sennett star.

There isn't any justice in all this, but the vivacious star is made to suffer because fate took her to the home of the murdered man just at the time the assassin was lurking in the shadows waiting the chance Miss Normand unwittingly gave him to enter the house and conceal himself, gun in hand.

* from *New York Globe*, February 13, 1922

'Do Not Worry' Is Advice Wired by Mabel Normand to Staten Island Parents

Claude G. Normand, father of Mabel Normand, whose name has been mentioned frequently in connection with the Taylor murder mystery, said to-day, at his home, 126 St. Mark's place, St. George, S.I., that he had been told by his daughter "not to worry," and that further investigation into the Hollywood case will show that she is innocent of any connection with it.

Mr. Normand read to a *Globe* reporter today a night letter received from Mabel, which follows:

Don't worry mamma and papa. Unfortunately I was at the home of Mr. Taylor a short time before he was killed. Had I not gone there for some books my name would never have been connected with the affair. They all know out here and at the house that I know nothing about the sad affair and I will be exonerated.

Mabel.

Mr. Normand said that neither he nor his wife are worrying about the notoriety given their daughter in connection with the case. "We feel that Mabel knows enough to take care of herself and are confident that she will be cleared eventually," she said.

"I asked Mabel over the long-distance phone last week if she wanted either her mother or me out there and she told me there was no need of either coming. Mabel has been in close touch with us by telephone and by telegraph ever since the beginning of this unfortunate affair."

Mabel according to Mr. Normand has always been a great reader, and has frequently sent books from the coast to her Staten Island home. The Normand house is a two-and-a-half story dwelling in the aristocratic section of St. George, and was bought by the screen star some five years ago, and presented by her to her parents.

Mr. Normand, questioned about the possibility of Mabel having written love letters to the murdered screen director, rejected the suggestion immediately.

"Mabel possibly has written letters to Taylor," he replied. "I would not be at all surprised if she has. But I certainly do not think that they were love letters. As far as I know, and I am very close to my daughter, she is not in love with any one, nor has she ever been to my knowledge."

Mabel said during the course of a recent telephone conversation with her father, the latter said today, that reports that she had fainted at Taylor's funeral and at other times since the murder, are absolutely untrue. The motion picture star knows California well, her father said, and lives there about eight or ten months of every year, spending the rest of the time with her parents in Staten Island.

"Mabel has written to us many times of meeting with unsuccessful motion picture aspirants from the east who have gone to California in an attempt to make good," the father said. "I know that many times she has advised these girls to return to their homes, and in some of the cases has even advanced them transportation money."

His daughter, Mr. Normand said, is a "good, clever girl" and has as much common sense and business acumen as most successful business men. "Mabel can write as good a contract as many lawyers," Mr. Normand declared, "and I have known of several instances where she has drawn up her own contracts with motion picture companies."

Mr. Normand said that he has heard from several of Mabel's friends in California and in New York, all of them expressing strong belief in his daughter's innocence of any connection with the case and advising him not to worry, that his daughter will be cleared after full investigation.

Mr. Normand is a man about fifty-nine years of age, gray-haired and quite active. His wife is about two years his junior. He was in his younger days well known as a ball-player, and has for several years connected with motion picture interests. He is at present assistant manager of the Stapleton Club, which operates moving pictures, entertainments and dances.

Mr. Normand said that Mabel was born in New Brighton, Staten Island, and that some time later the family moved to Stapleton. It was while living in Stapleton, Mr. Normand said, that Mabel secured her first picture company. His daughter, Mr. Normand said, was just finishing one of the pictures in which she is starring and expects to return east after its completion. He thought that she would arrive in New York some time in March, but could not fix a more exact date.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 14, 1922

Sennett Mum On Report He Was Quizzed

Mack Sennett, head of the film studios bearing his name, last night refused to comment upon a report that he had been questioned by District Attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine relative to the Taylor murder case.

"I have nothing to say," he declared. "Too much has been said already. It's a very disagreeable situation. I'm sorry that I cannot say anything."

Sennett asserted that much valuable film property was at stake in the motion picture industry as a result of the ramifications of the murder mystery investigation and did not wish to become involved in the affair.

"I'm interested only in the commercial end of this affair as it concerns the Mack Sennett Film Studio and not Mack Sennett himself," he said. "If my name is drawn into the case, I cannot help it, can I? Naturally I am willing to assist in any way possible in clearing up the mystery but what can I do?"

Asked point-blank whether he had been questioned by the District Attorney, his deputies, police detectives or other authorities, Sennett replied, "I have nothing to say."

"Is that taken to mean that you have been questioned?" he was asked.

"I have nothing to say," was his answer.

The District Attorney likewise declined to talk about Mack Sennett.

When he was asked whether he had questioned Sennett, he replied, "I cannot answer that question."

* from *Los Angeles Record*, February 15, 1922

Mabel Normand To Star in New Period Romance

To immortalize those early California days when vacqueros were bold and ladies held their sway, Mack Sennett is producing "Suzanna."

"Suzanna" is a comedy-drama -- a beautiful story of love and adventure in the days of California preceding the Mexican war, when naught else, but romance, adventure, dancing and pleasure filled the hearts of young and old.

Mack Sennett adapted "Suzanna" from the historical romance of the same name, written by Linton Wells, student of California history, well known newspaper man and soldier of fortune.

Monterey and vicinity -- the land made famous by the devout Padre Junipero Sierra -- will be seen as the locale of the story. The beauty and romance of that district and of those early days, recorded in song and fable so long and so often as to become familiar the world over, will be faithfully reproduced on the screen.

Mabel Normand has been selected by Mack Sennett to portray the title role of "Suzanna," a whimsical, pathetic child of fate who, though the daughter of a Don, has been raised a peon from the day of her birth.

The beautiful story will excel anything Miss Normand hitherto has done. It gives her an opportunity to appear in a role similar to those with which she has long been identified, yet infinitely more appealing. She is a romping, care-free, poorly dressed child woman, longing for love and the luxuries fate has long denied her yet which she ultimately attains.

F. Richard Jones, whose phenomenal success as the director of three great productions -- "Mickey," "Molly O" and "For Love of Money" -- has secured for him a position among the foremost directors of the day, is directing "Suzanna."

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 15, 1922

Mabel Seriously Ill of Grief Over Tragedy

By Walter Vogdes

"If they don't stop badgering Mabel there'll be crepe hung on the door."

This statement came from A. MacArthur, Mabel Normand's business manager, yesterday. The little film star's physical condition has been growing worse, rather than improving, her manager said, and volunteer investigators of the murder of William Desmond Taylor, private detectives and morbidly curious persons have been making her life miserable.

Yesterday her condition was so grave that a conference of attending physicians and managers from the Sennett studio was held, and plans were discussed for sending her to a secluded spot in some dryer climate. A cold contracted by the actress about a week ago has settled on her lungs and affected her vocal chords so that she is not able to talk above a whisper.

"While the investigation of the Taylor case is in progress Miss Normand wishes to star here in Los Angeles," said MacArthur. "Not because she is in any way implicated, but because her going away might be misconstrued.

"But the treatment she is receiving from the morbidly curious and from persons who attempted to force an entrance to her home and follow her when she goes out, is having such a serious effect on her physical condition that we are at a loss to just which course is best to pursue.

"Yesterday was warm and sunny, and the nurse in charge thought it would be advisable for Miss Normand to go for a short auto ride. No sooner was she out of the house, however, than she was followed by another machine and when she returned attempts were made to question her as to whether she had been on a 'secret mission.' The effect on her nerves was very disconcerting in view of the strain and grief she has been going through since Mr. Taylor's death."

A white haired trained nurse watches over Mabel Normand constantly each day and the actress spends most of her time in a sun parlor on the second floor of her bungalow apartment, where she is surrounded by books, many of them gifts from the slain director. The books and a small green parrot, a recent acquisition of the actress, form her chief interests. The parrot has the freedom of the house and Miss Normand will let no one feed it but herself.

It is known that hundreds of the film star's Hollywood friends have phoned and written her of their sympathy, and letters arrive each day from all parts of the United States from admirers assuring her of their faith and interest.

Not even the actress's closest friends are allowed to see her, but her impulsive way of "breaking training" is the despair of her guardians. Frequently when some particular friends calls or phones Miss Normand waves all nurses aside, and engages in long discussions, which leave her exhausted at the close.

The illness of the star, it is known, is resulting in the loss of thousands of dollars on a costume picture she has been making. The picture calls for expensive "sets," elaborate Spanish costumes, and a large supporting company.

The problems of this picture formed part of the conversation between Miss Normand and Taylor the last time she saw him, just before the murder, the actress told the writer.

Another poignant phase of the last interview related to fictional characters that she has longed to play on the screen. These were Lady Babbie in Sir James Barrie's play, "The Little Minister" and the chief female character in "The Morals of Marcus."

"I said to Mr. Taylor," explained the actress, "Oh, why does your company always produce the stories that are my favorites. Why I would gladly have played in "The Little Minister" and the chief female character in "The Morals of Marcus" for nothing because I love them so.

"It seems curious that part of our last talk should turn on my little disappointment, which seemed so important then, as to be almost a little tragedy of my own, when this great tragedy of Mr. Taylor's life, and mine too, was to follow right after."

* from *Oakland Post-Inquirer*, February 15, 1922

" Marie Prevost

Nobody ever hears of the wonderful things Mabel Normand does. It is only when she innocently gets into difficulties that people hear of her life in any way. Mabel is the most generous creature in the world and she is always doing things for other people. Why, I remember one day I was driving with her through the poorer districts of Los Angeles. We passed a house where a landlord was putting a mother and her five little children out of their home because the rent was not paid.

You should have heard the things that Mabel told that man. And what do you suppose she did? Dumped all the money she had in her bag into that mother's lap and gave the owner a check for three months' rent.

That's the sort of a girl Mabel is, and I just wish everybody knew it.

* from *Fargo Forum*, February 18, 1922

Mabel Normand gave us the best laugh of the week. Did you note the dispatch telling of the fact that a copy of The Police Gazette was "on the seat of her limousine" while she and her chauffeur were at the curb in front of Mr. Taylor's house?

The laugh comes when you consider that this country rewards, with chauffeurs and limousines, movie actresses whose literary tastes run to The Police Gazette.

There is a good secondary laugh in Miss Normand's statement that she respected Mr. Taylor and liked "his views on philosophy." It seemed that he discussed Freud, Haekel and Nietzsche with her. But that copy of The Police Gazette convinces us that Mr. Taylor did most of the discussing, while Mabel concealed her yawns as best she could. Freud and The Police Gazette! We'll say that Mabel is certainly catholic in her literary tastes.

If you insist on getting excited about the situation, the thing to get excited about, to our way of thinking, is not the fact that Hollywood stages some "wild parties" -- they can be found on every Main Street -- but the fact that a chit of a girl with a pretty face and an intellect that aspires no higher than The Police Gazette can earn more in a year than we pay the President of the United States. Surely our standards of values are all wrong.

Maybe we ought to pass a law about it, or have a congressional investigation, or something.

* from *Boston Advertiser*, February 20, 1922

" Adela Rogers St. Johns

I talked with Mabel Normand last night over the long-distance telephone between here and Los Angeles.

Her voice haunted me all night. She was crying. Her nurses didn't want her to talk, but she wanted to ask me if I believed she had anything to do with the Taylor murder, if anybody back here believed it?

And I told her what I believed, that no one connected her with it, no one believed she had done anything that had any connection with the shooting.

And I told her that I loved her and for her to take care of herself. Mabel's health is not good. Doctor's verdicts last year were discouraging -- and no one can make Mabel take proper care of herself.

* From *Chicago American*, February 21, 1922

" Wallace Smith,

Love scenes of a moving picture director and a famous film star -- the real life drama acted by William Desmond Taylor and his last love in screenland -- today became a vital sensation in the hunt for Taylor's mysterious assassin, a hunt that may end with the arrest of the actress.

They were love scenes as done by experts away from the screen -- by the man who had directed from Mary Pickford down in similar scenes of the screen and by the woman who has acted a hundred such incidents under the eye of the camera.

They may not have been quite up to the screen article, but, recited by the man who witnessed them, they made a background fitting the theory of Undersheriff Eugene Biscailuz that this actress was the one who killed Taylor.

Taylor's love scenes in life were narrated today by Henry Peavey, Taylor's houseman, whose charge that this same actress murdered his employer -- told in these dispatches yesterday -- did seismographic things to this section of the continent.

Not that it jarred some of the officials, who seem to show a strange indifference to developments in the case. Because of Henry Peavey's position in life they chose to disregard what he said, despite the fact that he knows more than any living person -- save one -- of what had been going on in the Alvarado St. home.

But even those disinterested ones were forced to take notice today when Peavey again put aside his crochet work and made startling disclosures of Taylor's affairs. Among them were the love scenes.

The actress may not be named, but it is known that she was questioned by the police. Peavey's story contradicted her own account of her relations with Taylor and it gives the lie to her statement that, although she visited Taylor the night of the murder, she had never been there alone before.

"But she was," said Peavey, "she was there just the night before Mr. Taylor was killed. And just a little before that she was there and she took down some of her pictures from the wall and cut them up with a scissors. And I've seen him take her in his arms and kiss her. He was very much in love with her and I've seen nights when he couldn't read but would put down his book and just keep looking at her picture and sighing.

"I know she was at the house the night before because that night I made a custard. Mr. Taylor didn't come home for dinner that night and the custard stayed there. When he came home I asked was there anything I could do. He said no, except to squeeze out some oranges and lemons for cocktails with gin. Then I went home.

"Next day the custard pan was empty and the cocktail glasses stood by the sink. And I saw her the next day and she told me she had eaten most of the custard. I remember especially because she said it was pudding and it wasn't at all -- but custard.

"Sometime ago I guess they had a quarrel or something. She came in one night, tore down two or three of her pictures off the wall and sat down on the floor with a scissors and began cutting the pictures into bits. Mr. Taylor said something to her and she said she guessed she could cut up her own pictures if she wanted and he said he guessed she could, too.

"But they made up again, I reckon. Because after that I saw him take her in his arms and hug her and kiss her. They kissed like that when they were in his study, the night before Mr. Taylor was killed. She was kissing him as hard as he was kissing her.

"He sure was in love with her. I'd see him many a night start to smoke a cigarette and read a book. After a while he'd put the book down and get one of her pictures and prop it up against a jar or something where he could see it right handy.

"Then he'd try to read again. But he couldn't read long. He'd have to keep looking at this picture, through the cigarette smoke. It was just like you see sometimes in the movies.

"He was always wondering if there wasn't something she wanted around her house. When she was away in the East he had me go to her house and ask the maid if there wasn't something he could get for her. That's the way he was.

"And he'd send her telegrams every night when she was away. I don't know what was in those telegrams, of course it wouldn't do for me to read them. Anyway, I can't read. But it got so that when I'd come in the girl at the telegraph office would say, 'Hello, did I have another message from Bill to ---?' calling her by her first name.

"Oh, yes he was in love with her all right. And I am sure she is the one who killed him."

Peavey's story was told on the twenty-first day that has passed since the slaying and all of the leaders of the various investigations admit that they have been baffled. They do not admit as yet that they have blundered.

...In the Altadena foothills, where Mabel Normand, once reported engaged to Taylor, is recuperating from the shock of her friend's death, came word that her manager hopes she soon will be able to complete the picture interrupted by the tragedy.

Until then the star seems to crave seclusion. Four guards were found today pacing the snow powdered estate where Miss Normand is resting. They met the visitor long before he reached the range of the house and quite firmly informed him that Miss Normand could not be seen.

* from *Fresno Republican*, February 21, 1922

When anybody talks about sounding the heights and depths of well read accomplishment they must be familiar with the literary tastes of Miss Mabel Normand. There is a young lady who reads 'em high and reads 'em low. We read in the public prints that she graciously allowed a reporter to interview her about the visit she made to that movie gentleman out in Hollywood and told the young lad that she had gone there for some reading matter to take home with her, the same being a treatise by a gentleman named Nietzsche who writes long paragraphs full of long and hard to pronounce. About philosophy, and all such like. Then we are assured by Mabel's chauffeur that another treatise which she had obtained on her visit was a copy of the Police Gazette. And instantly, and at once, and even sooner we say to ourselves that Mabel is there when it comes to literature. She doesn't cultivate one portion of her brain cells at the expense of the others. She is not going to be the possessor of a single track mind. That her mind shall not be a Jack Spratt and his wife sort of mind, but rather a combination of the Spratt variety wherein both fat and lean shall be furnished. When her eyelids droop over the "will to conquer" sort of highbrowism that Nietzsche deals out she can lightly turn to the Police Gazette and there fill up on beauty unadorned on the outside cover and learn how Kilrain nearly licked old John L., down on the hot sands of the Gulf of Mexico in the long ago. And view the picture and get the name and address of the most popular barber in Lilliwaup Falls, Wash. Or it may even be that she may send a postal to Box, number something somewhere or other, and beg back word where to send five dollars for a deck of marked cards. Between old Mister Nietzsche and The Police Gazette it's no wonder that Mabel is nervous and confined to her bed.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 21, 1922

Miss Normand To Work Again

Reports from the big brownstone house up in Altadena foothills, where Mabel Normand has gone into seclusion were to the effect that the famous screen star had so far recovered from her nervous breakdown that she expected to resume work on her latest picture at the Mack Sennett studio immediately.

The secluded house, which is the temporary home of Miss Normand, is guarded with a strictness, and efficiency that would do credit to the mountain retreat of a feudal baron. An Examiner reporter who braved the light snowfall that yesterday covered the foothills was met long before he reached the house by a guard with the polite but firm statement that Miss Normand could not be seen.

A further request to speak to her secretary was also refused. Miss Normand, it was stated, was too nervous to be disturbed and was a present in consultation with her secretary.

A number of machines were parked in the driveway leading to the residence, and finally from Al Herman, her director, it was ascertained that Miss Normand would immediately start work upon "Suzanna," upon which she was at work at the time of William D. Taylor's slaying. In fact, according to Herman, yesterday's storm was all that prevented a resumption of the work.

"Miss Normand has so far recovered that she will resume her work immediately," declared Herman. "The rest that she has secured since she came here has been of great value to her. Life at her former home in Los Angeles had become a regular nightmare.

William Davis, her chauffeur, who has been repeatedly quizzed by various officials in connection with any possible knowledge he may have of the murder, is stopping at the new address. Davis yesterday declared that if George Arto, the motion picture writer who declares that he saw Henry Peavey, Taylor's valet, talking to a strange

man in front of Alvarado street house on the night of the murder in the presence of a chauffeur, it was some one other than himself.

* from **Los Angeles Examiner**, February 22, 1922

Mabel Normand Ill With Influenza

Mabel Normand, who was scheduled yesterday to begin work at the Sennett lot on her latest picture was suddenly stricken with influenza, it was announced last night.

Her attack, the physicians attending her announced, was a light one and every hope for her immediate recovery was held out. She had some temperature, but last night was sleeping well and had rested considerably during the day. Physicians and her friends were not alarmed at her condition.

Miss Normand, who is in a new home at 1150 Foothill boulevard, Altadena, was unable during the day to see any one, besides those attending her and visitors were greeted with the information that the house was informally quarantined.

* from **Chicago Daily News**, February 22, 1922

Motion Pictures

By Carl Sandburg¹⁹⁵

In picking this hour and moment for a revival of the picture play, "Mickey," with Mabel Normand playing the chief role, Mr. Well of the Castle theater has shown courage.

Inasmuch as Miss Normand in various actions of truth, rumor and gossip meets us daily on Page One of the newspapers, the state street playhouse is going on the theory we might also wish to meet her as an artist and player.

She is worth meeting as artist and player. "Mickey" is an honest and a quaint picture play that earned upward of \$1,000,000 for its producer, Mack Sennett. There was much fine collaboration in the making of it, in story, direction, photography. And then after those considerations are reckoned, it is Mabel Normand who puts it over.

In quizzical and swift surprise, in facial flash of mummery, she is the nearest approach the motion pictures have to a feminine equivalent of Charlie Chaplin. A still picture of her in ordinary apparel conveys hardly a hint of the drolleries rough and fine of which she is capable.

If this reviewer should try to name women of the motion picture stage who use intelligence in their work, possessing some definite theory of pantomimic art, with a great and tantalizing ideal of that pantomimic art, this reviewer would name Mabel Normand among the first. She is among the fine and irreckonable artists, a personality and a work whose art is to be put among memorable things.

* from **Chicago American**, February 23, 1922

" Wallace Smith

...These led them to the theory that Taylor was shot down because he sought to protect the woman he loved -- the last woman he held in his arms and kissed before he was shot to death -- from slavery to the drug and to the gang that held her in its thrall.

One explanation of the gangland enmity was that Taylor had declared war on the dope ring because he found that the dope peddlers had fastened their murderous grip so firmly on certain men and women.

But recent developments showed that Taylor was interested in only one person -- the woman. If he could have saved her the rest of the world in which they both lived must have gone tumbling down its giddy road to ruin, scourged by the knots of the slavers who take their tribute in gold, in broken bodies and in shattered minds.

The whole nightmare of mystery became saturated with the fumes of the drug and alive with its feverish dreams.

Investigators under orders of Undersheriff Eugene Biscailuz brought back to him amazing reports.

One of these was the confession of one of the dope peddlers, who named ten men and women who paid \$1,000 a month in blackmail beside the considerable fortunes they spent in securing the smuggled "dope"...

Among the women who received consignments of drugs was the woman known to have been Taylor's latest love. The investigators were not surprised to find that it was heroin instead of the morphine which the woman is known to have used constantly.

"They'll take anything they can get," declared one of the deputies, a man in the confidence of Undersheriff Biscailuz. "And she was another of the ones who were supposed to be cured."

The tale of the woman is a tale of black tragedy. Known to the public as light-hearted, she has always moved in the shadow of sorrow. Her first love affair, with the man who befriended her, turned out to be as unfortunate as it was notorious.

Then came drugs and a career of wild galloping through the conventions. Friends intervened as the morphine began to etch its traces deep on the winsome face and as it began to leave its mark.

She "took the cure." There is a saying that a dope fiend never gets over it -- that reform is impossible. To make it impossible is the "business" of the drug ring, always alert for new "customers" and always jealous of the old ones.

Its agents, some of the moving in the best of society as represented here, are always offering temptation. The securing of drugs is made easy for the "cured." There is always some one handy with "relief" in an hour of despondency or weariness. And there is always the "hunger" of the victim for the drug.

These things were outlined in The American dispatches some time ago after several Los Angeles physicians had revealed the horrors of the drug ring and its hold on some of the young women.

These things were all found by the sheriff's men.

"If we wanted to we could tell a story that would turn the world upside down," said the same confidante of Undersheriff Biscailuz. "We have found things that would startle the country. But we are interested only in finding the party who killed Taylor..."

¹⁹⁵ i.e., Carl Sandburg, the noted American newspaper writer, poet, and Lincoln Biographer.

"...We have the report that they got the woman Taylor was in love with back in their clutches. We know she got these shipments ten weeks ago. Perhaps she went to Taylor for help. Perhaps she was bled white by their demands for money."

...The story told by (Harry "the Chink") Fields in Detroit has a remarkable semblance of truth when checked with the strange angles of the case that have developed in Los Angeles...¹⁹⁶

* from *Cincinnati Tribune*, February 24, 1922

Why did Mabel Normand have a copy of The Police Gazette with her when she called on the slain director? Does not this indicate that she had been to a barber shop immediately before? And if so, could she have taken a copy of The Police Gazette without slaying the barber?

* from *Chicago American*, February 25, 1922

" Wallace Smith,

Hired guards, armed with pistols and clubs, were rushed to the home of the one woman suspect in the murder of William Desmond Taylor today, following the report that detectives investigating the weird case were ready to mutiny, ignore their superiors, seize the famous player and submit her to a real examination.

They were prepared, it was said, to storm the house in which the woman is hiding, overpower the guard and kidnap their quarry. The report declared motors were to carry the kidnapping party into the foothills for questioning -- for the "third degree," such an extreme if it was found necessary, to unlock the screen beauty's stubborn lips.

Officials were quick to deny that such a mutinous plot existed. But it was known that they had checked carefully on the activities of their men supposed to be running down various angles to the strange case and it was known, too, that the mutinous spirit has been seething.

Word of the heroic plan, at any rate, was not slow in reaching those most interested in the protection of the woman. And the guards were placed on duty, alert for any attempt to pierce the barrier they made and under order to fight to the last any officer who attempted to force his way into the refuge without a warrant for the woman's arrest.

Reports of the mutiny started when it was found that all trails uncovered in the hunt for Taylor's assassin led finally to the door of this woman. She remained the one tangible thing -- beside the fact that a man was murdered -- in all the fog of rumors, theories, bungling and misinformation.

Whatever the motive advanced -- the woman lurked in the back of it. Jealousy, revenge, the drug hunger, a mad quarrel -- always this woman.

Despite these discoveries, the officials have been lenient, to state it mildly. The woman was questioned secretly and most politely, according to all information obtainable.

And it is quite certain that she lied.

She denied that she ever used "dope," although her slavery to drugs has been notorious for years. She swore that her friendship with Taylor was that almost of daughter and father, although it is known that he was madly in love with her and although it has been narrated that she was observed in passionate love scenes with him.

The weary hunters on the trail of the murderer were disheartened and desperate by the apparent immunity of the woman. They made an effort to conceal their discontent as each suggestion of clue or evidence forced them to the belief that she, if she can be made to talk, can solve the mystery.

They feel, too, that there is a way of "making her talk,"-- if not to confess the murder herself at least to reveal who did the murder.

These investigators have found that ten weeks ago she received a consignment of forbidden heroin. They have long been aware of her reputation as a dope slave. Through their experience with such persons, they are convinced that she would speak freely after being deprived of her drug ration for a short time.

If she actually knows the secret of the crime, the woman can easily be considered concealing the information to save her own reputation. Just as well, she can be reasonably pictured fearing the exposure of her slavery to dope.

Regardless of the truth or falsity of the story told by "Harry, the Chink," Fields in Detroit -- whose yarn, by the way, has not been entirely discarded as yet -- the dope ring that has been growing wealthy in Los Angeles becomes more deeply involved as the investigation goes forward.

Wong Lee, named by Fields as the tong hatchet man who Killed Taylor, remained a shadowy mystery in Chinatown. The slant eyed Celestials did not "sabe" Wong Lee. Nor was there any trace of "Johnny Clarke" or "Jenny Moore," also named as death plotters.

But it was reported that two sisters, known as dope peddlers employed by the ring, had fled to Bakersfield and, it is believed, farther north following the crime. Both of these young women, according to police information, had been most violent in the underworld in urging the killing of Taylor.

Back of this appeared another story of Taylor's personal encounter with a drug ring agent -- this time at the home of the woman he sought to save from the grip of the ring. Taylor was visiting at the woman's home, it was said, when the peddler arrived. Taylor threw him bodily from the house.

This peddler seemed inclined to "let it go at that." But he told his story to the two sisters, one of whom was his sweetheart. They were less forgiving. They dinned into his ears the gospel of revenge. Their best argument was the fact that he would lose a "customer" who paid him as much as \$2,000 a month if he allowed Taylor to protect this woman.

The report of the flight of the two sisters seemed to dovetail with the story of Assistant United States District Attorney Green that Taylor had started a fight against the drug ring to save the woman he loved.

The police of Bakersfield and cities to the north were warned by Los Angeles officials to be on the watch for the two sisters.

¹⁹⁶ Bruce Long: "Harry Fields was not Chinese, and it is not known why this derogatory nickname was applied to him...Fields' tale was later thoroughly discredited. See *Taylorology* #8."

At the same time Detective Sergeant Herman Cline hurried to San Francisco on a secret mission. It was stated that he was attempting to trace the telephone call sent by the suspected woman from Los Angeles to San Francisco the night of Taylor's assassination.

She is known to have telephoned a friend in a San Francisco hotel. She was heard to cry out:

"I'm in trouble; I'll need all the help I can get."

District Attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine assigned two detectives to the motion picture studios after hearing the report of Federal Attorney Green. Other men were assigned to seek a wealthy Los Angeles man, named in a letter from a New York attorney as the man who did the crime.

Deputies under the direction of Undersheriff Eugene Biscailuz undertook the search of Chinatown to trace the very loose threads of Fields' story. They were interested in the sudden return of a Chinese smuggler who disappeared abruptly the day Fields was arrested in Detroit.

The returned Chinese turned to them a bland, unsmiling countenance.

"No sabe," he replied to all their questions. He didn't understand what they were talking about.

From the home of Mabel Normand, the subject of Taylor's "blessed baby" letters, it was reported today that the actress was "considerably improved," following the relapse reported by her physicians yesterday. Shortly after the report was made public word came from the Mack Sennett studios, where Miss Normand has been performing, denying that she was "gravely ill."

According to physicians, Miss Normand was suffering from an attack of influenza and her condition was aggravated by the shock she suffered following Taylor's death.

It was to be remarked that William Davis, chauffeur for Miss Normand, has been questioned for a fourth time by detectives. He clung, they reported, to his corroboration of Miss Normand's story of her visit to Taylor's study...

* from *Movie Weekly*, February 25, 1922

The Real Mabel Normand

The Study of a Vibrant and Unusual Personality by One Who Knows Her Intimately

Stars invariably disappoint their worshippers.

We invest them with all the attributes of gods and then find them -- only human beings, with all the failings of mortals.

Sometimes we are disappointed to find they are not even human beings. I had a preconception of Mabel Normand before I met her several years ago.

I was wrong about her.

Her quips, her pranks and wanton wiles, as the poet would say, had been emphasized out of proportion. In a word, I had expected to find her the high priestess of Jazz, the essence of the Sennett comic spirit.

Mabel Normand is not that.

I have read many interviews and stories about her because I am profoundly interested in her. My conclusion is that she is the least known of all the stars.

In attempting to tell the truth about the real Mabel I am therefore doing an audacious thing, because necessarily I must discount the jazz idea.

First of all, she is in my opinion the best read of all the stars I have met, and I have lived in the Hollywood colony for several years.

She not only reads -- she remembers what she reads.

There is a vast fund of knowledge under those saucy black curls.

She is, furthermore, the most sympathetic human being I have ever encountered.

This is a constitutional attribute. She doesn't try to be kind; she is, instinctively so.

Her generosity is proverbial in the film colony.

There was a camera boy working in her company when she was at Goldwyn. He made a very small salary, scarcely enough to keep himself and his wife, for he was a beginner in the industry. And his wife was expecting the arrival of a baby. Mabel heard of this. One morning she handed a sealed envelope to a carpenter and told him to give it to the camera boy. She instructed him not to tell whence it came. The camera boy opened it and found a fifty dollar bill. He never learned who sent to him, but he certainly suspected the source, for one cannot be around Mabel for long without knowing the quick, fine impulses of her heart.

She is the feminine counterpart of the man who would give the shirt off his back.

Her charity is little known because, without recourse to the scriptural warning, she never lets her right hand know what her left hand is doing.

There was an unfortunate girl taken to a Los Angeles hospital without funds. The case came to Mabel's Attention. She paid the girl's expenses. Upon her recovery the girl came to Mabel's home and sought further aid. Mabel took care of her and gave her little odd jobs to do. That girl stole from Mabel Normand. She confessed the theft -- and Mabel forgave.

She is quick to appreciate the art and personality of another actress.

She once expressed admiration for a star of far less ability than herself.

"I think she is lovely," she said to a mutual friend. "But I have never met her. I wish you would tell her that I would like an autographed picture of her."

The other actress was surprised and delighted to receive such a request from the great comedienne, and, of course, sent a photograph, asking Mabel for one in return.

When that same actress sailed for Europe on a trip some time ago, she found a great mass of flowers in her stateroom. They bore Mabel Normand's card with best wishes.

Such are the little things that distinguish Mabel -- she is "Mabel" to everyone.

Yet she is the most irresponsible of mortals. She can forget more appointments and still retain friendships better than any human being alive, because everyone knows that she is -- well, just Mabel. You almost want her to break appointments because her apologies are always so charming and real.

Nor does she disappoint as a comedienne. She has a keen wit, sometimes audacious but never cutting.

She cannot understand artifice or conceit because it is not in her nature.

She may be irresponsible toward social affairs, but never toward her art. She is a conscientious and genuine artist. True, her work is spontaneous, just as it appears on the screen. She is singularly gifted. But few realize the labor she has given to that gift.

She reads everything that will help her perfect herself. Chief among her textbooks is the screen. She attends on an average of five pictures a week, and is forever making notes. There is always a memorandum book tucked away in her vanity bag, and it contains a bewildering array of notes; interesting lines from books she has read; criticisms of her own pictures and others she has seen; ideas for use in characterization; memorandums of gifts which she wants to make; appointments; random thoughts; and books which have been recommended to her.

She lives without pretension -- one car, a comfortable but unostentatious apartment, a few necessary servants. Although she has a rare collection of jewels, she wears them sparingly. Her dress is always in exquisite taste, but never the sort to challenge attention.

It is impossible to analyze charm, hence it is impossible to describe the personality of Mabel Normand. It is the sort that makes you love her instantly, but more than that, it is the sort that makes you feel that she loves you. It is pervasive and distinctive. She has the rare mental faculty of understanding people upon first meeting and of engaging them on their level of interests.

I am sure that the studio gateman knows nothing of Mabel's love for books; but he does know her love for flowers, and every morning regularly she presents a little nosegay for her dressing room. It is always placed in water on her dressing table, while American Beauties from a less sincere admirer may be relegated to a corner -- or sent to a hospital.

It is this strain of the genuine that is dominant in the personality of Mabel Normand. You believe in her without reservation.

I once asked a studio official if the company ever had trouble with her. I had in mind her way of eluding engagements.

He was a hard-boiled individual, who bows to no star, and he looked me straight in the eye.

"If anyone has trouble with Mabel Normand," said he, "he is to blame for it. But I cannot imagine anyone finding fault with her."

While we were chatting, a gentleman called by appointment with the star. He did certain work for her. She was unable to see him because she was having her hair dressed. But she sent down a charming note of apology and enclosed a signed check asking him to fill it out for whatever amount she owed him!

Of course, she has been imposed upon. Her secretary must stand between her and beggars all the time, for people have a way of considering stars legitimate prey, believing, I suppose, that their wealth is inexhaustible. Therefore her secretary and her managers keep her carefully hedged about. If they did not, she would be beggared of time and money.

A bewitching, elfin personality, lovable and loving, an alert and brilliant mentality, a rare and radiant charm that is both physical and intellectual, a star who is a heroine even to her personal maid -- such is Mabel Normand.

If my study of her seems eulogistic, I can only refer you to her friends of the film colony; they, no doubt, would be even more eulogistic.

She is one idol who can stand a closeup.

* from *Daily Mirror* [New York], February 25, 1922

Los Angeles, Friday -- Miss Mabel Normand, the film star, is in a critical condition and partially paralysed [sic] as a result of influenza.

It will be remembered that she was on friendly terms with Mr. William Desmond Taylor, the film director who was murdered in his bungalow. Miss Normand, who was apparently the last person to see him alive, said he told her he had a premonition that something was going to happen to him.

* from *Chicago American*, February 27, 1922

"Wallace Smith,

Somewhere in the tangle of telephone and telegraph wires traveling up the coast between Los Angeles and San Francisco may be the echo of a frantic woman's voice -- and the solution of the mystery in the murder of William Desmond Taylor.

For that voice, and in a desperate hope that they have hit the right trail at last, detectives hunted today after it became known that the woman Taylor loved, the last woman he held in his arms and kissed before he was killed, not only telephoned on the night of the murder, but had sent three telegrams imploring help.

The detectives directed their search for a mysterious "Mrs. Walker," to whom both the long distance call and the telegrams were addressed. Two of them, especially assigned by District Attorney Woolwine, picked up the trail in San Francisco.

It was to be remarked that a private detective, employed by friends of the woman involved, also had interested himself in the hunt for "Mrs. Walker."

It had been rumored that this detective had been hired not so much to uncover evidence, as to cover it up and obscure every trail that might lead to the woman.

Were it not for apparent leniency shown by some officials in Los Angeles the private detective would be rather busily engaged covering trails inasmuch as every one so far found has headed directly for the door of the woman.

With the report of the telegrams, as well as the telephone call, it was stated that the woman would be called upon for some sort of an explanation. Already several discrepancies have been discovered in the story she told at the first secret and "polite interview" which passed for an investigation.

In that story she said that she had spent a quiet evening at home, reading. She had expected a telephone call from Taylor, she admitted, but when it did not come she did not bother especially. She retired at 9 o'clock according to that story.

Yet at this very time, according to detectives, she was frantically telephoning "Mrs. Walker" at a San Francisco hotel.

"I'm in trouble," she cried over the wire. "I need help."

The same evening and while she was waiting for the long distance connection to be made, she is said to have sent the first telegram. It, too, was an appeal for assistance.

The second telegram was sent the morning Taylor's body was found, but before news of the tragic discovery had been made public. The third followed within two hours, according to the investigators.

The detectives, of course, reckoned that the telegram and the telephone call must have had their inspiration in the shooting of Taylor. They are taken to indicate that the woman knew of the killing before accounts of the tragedy were published in the newspapers here.

It was a secret at the office of Undersheriff Eugene Biscailuz that the woman has been under suspicion from the beginning, if not as the murderess, then at least as one who could clear away every shred of the mystery and name the slayer.

There is a feeling that she is concealing her information because if the facts of her relationship with Taylor and her dealings with the dope peddlers were made public, here life as an actress would be snuffed out overnight.

Her connection with the drug ring, and the fact that she was among a score known to have been blackmailed by three narcotic pirates, has been notorious. In regard to this, too, the detectives claim she lied when she was submitted to the "polite interview."

She swore that she had never even touched drugs. As she was making this vow operatives learned that eight weeks before she had received a wholesale consignment of heroin.

The real identity of the shadowy "Mrs. Walker" was a mystery. It was known, the San Francisco authorities are reported to have said, that "Mrs. Walker" had been stopping at one of the leading hotels of that city. It was to this hotel that the long-distance call from the Los Angeles woman was traced.

The very next day or the day following, the mysterious "Mrs. Walker" disappeared from the hotel. The early search failed to reveal where she had gone.

Another alluring and mocking clue in the spectacular slaying was the finding of a reddish hued amber hairpin in the bedroom of Taylor's home. Its familiar curve seemed to twist itself into a taunting question mark. Surely the owner of that hairpin could throw some light into the mysterious shade. Perhaps the owner itself was involved in the motive of jealousy which some of the investigators still see behind the crime.

The trail of the dope peddlers still twined through the jungle of the theories and speculation. From one of their number, locked up in the county jail, one of the sheriff's men secured information confirming the report that Taylor was killed because he had thrashed a dope peddler.

"Taylor was crazy about this woman," said the jailed drug runner. "She stood for him, although I don't think she was especially crazy about him.

"She thought enough of him, though, to lie to him when he heard a report that she was going against the dope. She started out using nothing but morphine, but now she'll go against anything she can get. Heroin is one of the things she has picked up a liking for.

"Well, she told Taylor that she had been against the dope but that she had taken the cure and was off the stuff. We all laughed because we knew she was getting it regular.

"Then one night Taylor called at her house. He got there just as this dope peddler was delivering a consignment of the stuff. Taylor grabbed the dope and the peddler, too. He gave him a terrible beating and threw him down the stairs...

"...And take it from me, when you get them or get this fellow you'll be able to find out who killed Taylor."

At the Altadena home of Mabel Normand it was stated that the actress, who suffered a severe relapse last week, was recovering slowly from a severe attack of pneumonia and the shock she suffered at Taylor's death. At the Mack Sennett studios it was reported that she expected to return there before the end of the week for the completion of the picture, "Susanna," which was interrupted in production by the tragedy.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 11, 1922

Quiz Former Secretary to Mabel Normand

Julia Brew,¹⁹⁷ formerly employed by Mabel Normand as private secretary, was interviewed yesterday by Dist.-Atty. Woolwine in connection with his investigation of William Desmond Taylor, motion-picture director.

At the conclusion of the interview, which was attended also by Detective Sergts. King and Winn; Dist.-Atty. Woolwine stated Miss Brew's story had shed no new light on the mystery. Miss Brew was employed for four years by Miss Normand, but resigned last September.

* from *Hartford Times*, March 13, 1922

Unhappy Experiences Trail Mabel Normand, Taylor Mystery Figure

By Forrest White

The murder of William Desmond Taylor, motion picture director, has not been cast into the limbo of forgotten mystery, but with the police department continuing to attach importance to one or two of the hundreds of anonymous letters that have poured in from all parts of the country, it would seem to be on its way to a sealed crime of yesterday.

¹⁹⁷ Marilyn Slater, friend of Julia Benson: "Julia's maiden name was Brew. She was married in the 1920's for about 2 years. Julia's husband died of tuberculosis. The story goes that he became ill on their honeymoon. I can't think of his first name right now. She never talked much about him." See also: <http://looking-for-mabel.webs.com/juliabrewbenson.htm>

The motion picture world, once so aroused, and so free with promises of undivided effort and unlimited expenditure to prove to the world that the slaying of "Bill" Taylor could in no sense be attributed to the life of the picture world as represented by the Hollywood colony, is gradually falling back into the old path, cautious but unconcerned.

Mabel Normand meantime has had another unhappy experience. Reported ill and unstrong by the prominence she achieved in the case, as a "good friend" of Taylor, and the last person known to have seen him alive, she retired to a secluded home in Altadena, a perfectly respectable suburb of Los Angeles, to soothe her nerves and recuperate her strength before resuming work in the pictures.

Her recovery, in her seclusion, was rapid enough to permit her to attend a few nights ago a party given at a cozy little place where jazz music exerts its soothing effect, especially to the nerve-broken and weary, until an early hour of the morning. In the little party that assembled at her table was George S. Patterson, a young business man of Los Angeles, clubman, famous golfer and the son-in-law of W. C. Brown, late president of the New York Central railway.

When the party broke up after an evening of music and dancing young Patterson returned to the hotel he had been staying for several days. He remained in his room until the following evening when he won the consent of a fellow guest to accompany him on a motor trip to San Diego, where Mrs. Patterson was reported to have gone for a visit with her children.

The next morning Mabel Normand among others, was shocked by the news that shortly after midnight, in the hurried night ride, the car that young Patterson was driving had skidded off the road, overturned and killed him almost instantly. Mrs. Patterson returned immediately to her home on receiving the news and the body of Patterson is to be returned east to his old home for burial. Miss Normand today is receiving the sympathy of her friends that she should, by unfortunate coincidence, have been so near another tragedy at her re-entry into the life of the colony with a little innocent music and dancing.

Despite the fact that all the press agents in Hollywood have been organized into a unit to take the stain of irresponsible living from the motion picture colony, and their propaganda is being broadcast throughout the country, District Attorney Matthew Brady, who brings Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle to trial for the third time in San Francisco today as responsible for the death of Virginia Rappe, is not only skeptical of any reform among the motion picture folk, but believes them still defiant of the conventions.

Mr. Brady has had trusted men at work in Los Angeles seeking light on the life in Hollywood's picture colony ever since the Arbuckle case aroused him into action, and has just issued a solemn warning to the motion picture industry that it stands in exactly the same place that the saloon did twenty years ago and that the motion picture people, with the same arrogance and the same contempt for public opinion, will surely pass just as the saloon did unless they get busy at once and bring about genuine reform from within the organization, scrapping the actors, and others who offend against propriety.

District Attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine, of Los Angeles county, a brave and conscientious official, unafraid and uninfluenced by the propaganda that is being put out by the motion picture people, and endorsed by some of the most influential bodies of the city, is the one man who may be expected to exert influence to solve the Taylor murder mystery and justify the law, no matter at what cost.

Mr. Woolwine is conducting an independent investigation and no man knows how far he has gone toward a solution of the mystery. It is believed, however, that he has made material progress, largely through the process of elimination and there are several uneasy members of the motion picture colony who would give much just now to know how they stand at the district attorney's office.

Another ten days or two weeks should tell the story about the murder of William Desmond Taylor.

If Woolwine also fails to develop some tangible clew within the time mentioned, the slaying of Taylor will probably remain the same mystery that it is today.

* from *Motion Picture Classic*, April 1922

" J. Marion Lake

[from an interview with Phyllis Haver] ...Mabel Normand, that gifted giver of gifts, has sent in a Christmas present -- this interview takes place between Christmas and New Year's Day -- of an exquisite old-fashioned china lady in elongated hoop skirts whose further business in life will be that of straddling the vulgar mouthpiece of a telephone. Phyllis is ecstatic over it.

"Oh!" she breathes to the messenger, "tell Mabel I just love her to death! Isn't it the *sweetest* thing? the *loveliest*! Oh! the *darlingest*!"

With each adjective she turns to me. With each adjective I grin at her and mutter in approved California, "Y'betcha!" I remember the day Mabel gave me a quart of -- but why disturb the dead? The only thing that matters is that Mabel is Hollywood's prodigal at giving.

Phyllis turned to me again.

"I was in the hospital for seven weeks, but every day I was there Mabel sent me flowers..."

* from the Goldwyn press-book for "Head Over Heels," released in April 1922.

The story: Tina Bambinetti, a little Italian acrobat, has been engaged by Sterling, a member of a New York theatrical firm, to come to New York as a star at a salary of \$500 a week. When she arrives in native costume and reports at the office, Sterling recognizes that he has picked another lemon and asks Lawson, the glum legal member of the firm, to find a way to squirm out of the contract. Orders are given not to admit Tina, but she puts the entire office force to flight by her athletic prowess and crawls through the transom into the inner office.

Squibbs, a press agent, learns of the situation and offers for \$1,000, to get Tina an outside contract which would relieve the partners of the "lemon," plucked by Sterling in Italy. He calls in Wilkins, who is looking for a young woman to star in motion pictures. One look at Tina, in her Sis Hopkins-sort of get-up, convinces him that she would never pass muster for any sort of picture. Squibbs, however, tells Wilkins that by taking Tina to a beauty specialist he can make her look like a million dollars.

Tina after two comical, fear-inspiring hours at the beauty parlor emerges so pretty and so utterly transformed that Wilkins is eager not only to star her but to enter into more intimate personal relation with her. Tina, however, has been captivated by the glum Lawson and in the ensuing ten days they fall genuinely in love. Lawson wants her to give up her career for him. She wants both and is urged on by Wilkins to sign the motion picture contract with him, hoping thereby to separate her from Lawson.

In the midst of the dispute, Lawson receives a note from Edith Penfield, who has been waiting for him an hour on the roof garden above, about a theatrical contract. He hurries off; Tina sees the note from Edith and is told by Wilkins that she is an old sweetheart of Lawson's. In a jealous fury Tina rushes to the roof garden, leaps on a skater's back and is carried across to the table where Lawson and Edith sit. Outraged by what she thinks is her lover's desertion for an old flame, she gives Edith an awful drubbing before she can be pulled off. She returns forlorn to her apartments, sends Wilkins packing, and is preparing to return to her native Italy when Lawson, as wretched as she is repentant, rushes frantically in as she is leaving. They fall into each other's arms and all their differences are quickly straightened out.

* from *Camera!*, April 1, 1922

Mabel Normand and her company have returned from San Luis Rey River where they have been shooting scenes for "Suzanna" in which ten thousand head of longhorned cattle appear.

Miss Normand is completing plans to leave for the east immediately following the completion of "Suzanna," which is scheduled for the latter part of April. In June, she will sail for London. Later she will visit Paris, Berlin, Rome, Naples and Madrid. In the fall Miss Normand expects to return to Hollywood to start work on another Mack Sennett-Mabel Normand feature.

* from *Sydney Picture Show*, April 1, 1922

Mabel Normand figured before the public in connection with the Taylor murder, but the thing that interests Australia more, just at present, is her return to the screen in Molly-O. It's her best since Mickey, and here's a vote of thanks to the clever little comedienne.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, April 10, 1922

Have Not Canceled; Says Miss Normand

Los Angeles--Mabel Normand and John Waldron, manager of the Mack Sennett studios, today denied a report current in screen circles in the East that the comedienne had accepted \$40,000 to cancel her contract with the Sennett corporation.

Notoriety gained by Miss Normand in connection with the Taylor case was said to be responsible for the rumored story, Waldron said.

"How long does Miss Normand's present contract run?" he was asked.

Waldron declined to answer.

The present picture in which Miss Normand is starring -- "Suzanna"--will be completed in a few weeks, it was said at the Mack Sennett studios.

Miss Normand will leave for a vacation at that time, Waldron said. She plans to visit Europe.

* from *Oakland Post-Inquirer*, April 14, 1922

Hollywood Joyous; Predicts "Fatty" Will Come Back

Hollywood was staging a celebration of its own today over "Fatty's" acquittal.

"Can Arbuckle come back? Of course he can!" was the exclamation heard on all sides. The consensus of opinion in moviedom was that "Fatty," backed by the endorsement the Virginia Rappe jury gave him, will be taken to the hearts of the American people again as a favorite comedian.

Despite the confidence expressed on all sides, Hollywood will watch the "test film" soon to be released by the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation to determine Arbuckle's popularity with anxiety second only to that of the big comedian himself.

All moviedom has something at stake on the reception given this picture.

The general opinion that "Fatty" can again come into his own was shared by Charlie Chaplin, the only funny man whose fame is greater than Arbuckle's.

Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks and other stars expressed the same belief in Arbuckle's future.

Mabel Normand, who used to work with "Fatty" in the old Keystone comedy days, exclaimed:

"Thanks heaven that the jury vindicated Roscoe! His fame will be only greater now. I'm glad they went out of their way to place the stamp of approval on him."

In the midst of the general rejoicing in "Fatty's" stronghold there were only a few voices raised with prophecies that the comedian will be a "flop" when he attempts to come back.¹⁹⁸

* from *Tarentum, Pennsylvania Telegram*, April 18, 1922

Frankly, Miss Normand was a disappointment to us in all her vehicles since "Mickey" until we saw her in Molly-O. She is the same fascinating, mischievous sprite that first won our admiration, and in our estimation she should stay in productions which have the supervision of Mr. Sennett and the direction of F. Richard Jones, for no other producer seems to be able to give her the opportunity of exercising her unique and wholly splendid talent.

¹⁹⁸ The nature of the Arbuckle scandal and people's reaction to it was eloquently summed up in a conversation I had with someone not all that well informed on the subject. In reference to the St. Francis Hotel incident, he spoke of Arbuckle with declamatory epithets. When I pointed out to him that Arbuckle had been completely exonerated in the final court hearing of the case, his response was (in effect): "Well, maybe, he wasn't guilty of *that*, but he must have been guilty of *something*. (So he just got what was coming to him.)"

* from *Los Angeles Times*, April 18, 1922

Periled Film Star Rescued

Victor Falkenau, builder of Gary, Ind., central figure in Chicago's great building trades lockout in 1900 and now president of the Pasadena American Plan Industrial Association, met his next door neighbor last night most unconventionally, and as a result:

Mabel Normand, winsome screen comedienne, is suffering from today from "nerves," having narrowly escaped serious injury, possible death.

Victor Falkenau is wincing from the twinges of a strained ligament in his leg, while receiving congratulations from film celebrities galore.

This is how it happened:

Mabel, the next-door neighbor, was tooling her heavy limousine up the steep grade on Rubio Drive, at the summit of which is her Altadena bungalow at 1101 Foothill Boulevard, when suddenly the motor "died" and the brakes "let go." The big car stopped, then began rolling backward.

On one side of the roadway is a sheer drop of twenty feet, on the other a twenty-foot cliff. The car was not proceeding toward the cliffside.

Miss Normand struggled with the controls, but in vain. Then she tried to open the door to leap from the car. At this juncture, Mr. Falkenau, who had witnessed her predicament, ran from the sidewalk, jumped on the running board, opened the door, and turned the steering wheel hard a port. A few seconds later the car bumped into the cliff and stopped.

Gallantly, then, Mr. Falkenau introduced himself to Mabel, and escorted her to her home, where she has been recovering from illness which prostrated her shortly after she was brought into prominence in connection with the William Desmond Taylor case.

* from *Writer's Club of Hollywood*, April 22, 1922.

[In an address to some Los Angeles townspeople, Mabel stated:]

Too many of you townspeople, (note, I say townspeople, we're your neighbors and want to know you better.) too many of you think of us in terms of the transient, of the tourist. I sometimes feel to a great many individuals we are like a convention, a crowd, descending on a city for a short time, spending a certain amount of money, then departing! But we are not going to depart! Los Angeles is the film capital of the world and will remain so.

* from *Chicago, Illinois Exhibitor's News*, May 6, 1922

Molly-O with Mabel Normand proved a good drawing card and pleased ninety percent at increased prices. I don't think it pleased as well as Mickey, though.

* from *Movie Weekly*, May 6, 1922

No Kidding!

A woman admirer of Mabel Normand read in the paper of Mabel's fondness for animals. Mabel, it seems, make sit her business to see and pet everyday the animals used in production of her new picture "Suzanna." So Mabel's admirer asked permission to add to the collection a pet of her own named Sammy. It came by express, all nicely crated.

A "prop" boy opened the crate and out jumped a frisky young kid. It made for the star's bungalow and proved to be most exclusive. No amount of persuasion could induce it to join the rest of the zoo, so a "young house" was constructed for it on the veranda of Mabel's studio home.

"Say, Mabel," asked someone, "if I kid Sammy, will it get your nanny?"

* from *New York City Exhibitor's Trade Review*, May 6, 1922

Molly-O. Good business all week, something unusual at Colonial (Theatre). Played to unusually large audiences.

* from *Exhibitor's Herald*, Lyric Theater, Florida, May 27, 1922

Molly O

Even better than Mickey. It will please anywhere.

* from *Capt. Billy's Whiz Bang*, June 1922

Mabel Normand entertained a half dozen friends at a box party to see "The London Follies," March 5th, just one month after William D. Taylor's death. She also attended the races at the Los Angeles Speedway the following Sunday, where she giggled all afternoon with a group of girl friends, went down into the auto pits to talk with the drivers and pretty generally enjoyed herself. On the following evening she was again seen dancing at the Cocoanut Grove at the Ambassador.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, June 8, 1922

Begs For Square Deal

Mabel Normand Says Newspaper Stories Caused Public to Think Hard of Her; Asks Fair Play

Chicago -- Mabel Normand spent the day in Chicago on her way to New York. The contrast of her visit here with the triumphant visits of other years before William Desmond Taylor was slain and her name linked with his seemed to make her sad.

"You remember the last time I was here, don't you," she said to a reporter. Mack Sennett and Thomas Ince and 'Fatty' Arbuckle and I were together just before 'Molly O' was released.

"I was so happy then because I felt that in 'Molly O' I had done work that really showed ability. And we had such a good time in Chicago. Neither 'Fatty' nor I ever dreamed that before we would come again we would have so much trouble."

She was dressed in a fawn colored tailored suit and a smart little hat to match.

"I have never made a statement since my trouble in Hollywood," she said when asked if she did not feel that she ought to say something about the event that resulted in much publicity for life in movie land and brought her into the center of an investigation of events in the life of the director whose slayer has not yet been apprehended.

"But I do want to appeal to the public-- once upon a time I called them 'my' public"-- and a forlorn little smile flitted across the tired looking face that was once one of the most beloved that flashed across the movie screen.

"I want to ask them to give me a square deal. They were very kind to me once -- when I was working hard to accomplish something worth while. Then just when my biggest picture was released -- this horrible thing came and the newspapers were full of stories about us out there -- and my public believed them. Oh, I'm not blaming the newspapers -- the reporters only wrote the stories that 'catty' people out there told them -- but it's hard on me isn't it?"

The famous Mabel Normand smile flashed for a minute.

"I'm going to New York for a rest and a visit. I may stay a few weeks and I may stay a few months. I don't know anything about my future. I've left it in Mr. Sennett's hands. If he says Mabel goes back to the Coast to work -- that's where little Mabel goes!"

"A romance! Heavens, no!"

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, June 9, 1922

" Louella Parsons

With reservations all booked for the *Aquitania*, it is high time Mabel Normand is arriving here if she expects to sail June 13. She is due this morning, having spent a part of yesterday in Chicago, where she was interviewed by the newspapers on the William Desmond Taylor murder. She said in an interview she expected to consult Mr. Sennett in New York, and her plans depended largely upon his verdict. If he told her to go back to the coast she would return immediately and begin work, while if he said she should stay in the East she would follow his instructions. One of the evening papers carried an interview with Miss Normand and spoke of her as sadder since her unpleasant experience in the Taylor case.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, June 14, 1922

Mabel Normand Sails Quietly on Aquitania

Sailing quietly, her departure known only to a few intimate friends, Mabel Normand, film star, was one of the cabin passengers on the *Aquitania* of the Cunard Line, which left the foot of West Fourteenth street yesterday for Cherbourg and Southampton. With her was a friend, Miss Juliet Courtial [sic]. Miss Normand did not reach the slip until just a few minutes before the sailing hour and parried all questions asked as to the shooting of Taylor, the film director.

"Please don't discuss that," she said. "I've been running away from it for months. That is one of the reasons I am going away to get a rest."

She said she was going to London to meet her mother and would also go to Paris and Berlin. She said she would have sailed on June 6, but while making the film "Suzanne,"[sic] a Spanish picture, holy Week intervened and no work was done on the picture during that time.

She said she would return in August and start work in September on another picture in Los Angeles. She was on the passenger list as Miss Mabel "Norman."

* from *The Daily Mirror* (London), June 21 1922

Miss Mabel Normand, the film star, arrived in London yesterday and is occupying what she calls the Fairbanks suite at the Ritz. She is going to stay a month in England, which will include a week-end at Mr. Harry Tates house at Sutton, and she intends to visit Paris and Berlin before her return to America.¹⁹⁹

* from *Movie Weekly*, June 24, 1922

WILL HAYS BATTLES "KID" VICE

The inside story of how he is cleaning up Hollywood

By Truman B. Handy

Have you a little dope fiend in your home?

Are you married -- or do you live in Hollywood?

These are merely a couple of epithets one hears nowadays in regard to the capitol of Filmland. Perhaps Hollywood, this pretty little suburb of Los Angeles, has suffered from an overdose of publicity of the wrong sort superinduced by the Arbuckle scandal and the notoriety given various movie divorces. It may be erroneous for the most part, but on the other hand...

Where there is smoke there is a flickering flame.

Recently Hollywood's so-called "bad name" began to affect the sale of Hollywood's chief product, motion pictures.

And when the box office commenced to tell a tearful story of lost film sales the producers themselves paid a neurasthenic heed to the cry of "cleaner and better pictures."

And Will H. Hays, formerly United States postmaster, a man of unimpeachable personal character, was selected for the quite difficult and dubious task of "cleaning up the movies" at a salary -- ahem! -- of \$150,000 per annum.

And he became chief advisor and protector of the Producer's Protective Association, an organization incorporated under the laws of the State of New York. And he pledged himself to assist them in weeding out the undesirable workers of the motion picture colony of Hollywood and to help the Adolph Zukors and Carl Laemmles to produce pictures whose plot elements would be sufficiently cooked for mental assimilation by the veriest six-year old.

It is doubtful at first, these plans, and there was scoffing in Hollywood.

¹⁹⁹ For an at length account of Mabel's European travels by Marilyn Slater, see: <http://looking-for-mabel.webs.com/europepart1.htm>

But some weeks have now elapsed -- and the effects of the Hays housecleaning have been sorely felt in some quarters.

Perhaps one percent of the present film-colony residents is thoroughly "undesirable," as morals go. But, however small the ratio, it is this element which has showered myriad of criticisms upon Hollywood and its residents, so much so that the average citizen of any other locality than Hollywood believes the movie Mecca to be the reincarnation of Sodom and Gomorrah.

It is quite true that Hollywood has a coterie of residents possessing -- and adhering to -- a peculiar set of morals all their own, although one would not exactly call Hollywood a strictly bohemian community, for its denizens do not live by the tenets of utter bohemianism.

But there is, however, a dash of free love here -- and a scattering of common-law marriage there.

One couple, in particular, has lived together as man and wife for several seasons. He is a leading man, she a former vampire star. They move in the best of Filmland's society and are well thought of as residents of the community.

This is one phase of Hollywood's morals. A strict common-law marriage is easily recognized and passed by unnoticed as long as those who entered into the pact are faithful to each other. But, however, should the woman be at all promiscuous in her affections she would be regarded as an object of shame and pity -- and, unless she were of impeccable position as an artist, would be ostracized.

It is not these common-law wives of Moviedom who have brought down the condemnation onto the heads of film players.

But it IS the gold-diggers -- the young women who have come into Hollywood from all parts of the globe to gain fame in the movies; who have been willing to sacrifice their decency on the altar of Ambition; who have placed themselves on the public auction block and have sold themselves for the highest favors.

One of these a few months ago was an extra girl, glad to get anything at all to do in a mob scene. A certain producer chanced to see her and became enamored of her charms. She was called into his office and offered her "chance."

But with that offer went the producer's "proposition." Which she accepted -- and we now see her name prominently displayed in feature productions, and the young lady herself rides in a heavily-upholstered, high-powered motor car.

A year ago a beautiful blonde leading woman, formerly a Pathe serial queen, was called to a Culver City studio to discuss with the producer her possibility of playing a featured role. She was hardly ensconced in his private office when she observed that he locked the entrance door.

"I was rather used to this," she told me, "and didn't worry. I've been in manager's offices before."

But, however, during the business conversation the producer suddenly fixed his gaze upon her piercingly.

"Oh lady!" he said passionately, "if you can only do to the public what you do to me -- you'll be the biggest star in the world! And I'll make you that star if..."

The story is the usual one -- except that the girl refused his offer and has never since been given a role in any of his productions.

And again...

A very young, attractive little blonde was dancing in a Los Angeles cafe at the supper revue. Another producer -- one of the first in the picture field -- saw her and several nights later sent his chauffeur to her with his card.

On the latter was the following message.

"If you will allow my chauffeur to drive you to my studio tomorrow night at 11:30, I will be glad to meet you and discuss the chance of signing you on a contract for my pictures."

The particular little blonde dancer has never yet been seen on the screen for the following is the answer she returned:

"I will be glad to meet you during the daytime. But why the night appointment?"

Many of the serious artists of motion pictures resent the "intrusion" of innumerable New York chorus girls who have come to Hollywood to live the easy, moneyed life that the position of leading woman in film production offers.

These women are not in pictures because of their love of Art. They, for the most part, belong to the ultra-fast set and can be seen in the various cafes dancing hilariously and exploiting their personal charms with utter abandon.

Two in particular are notorious drunkards and have hardly ever been sober when seen publicly. Another is a drug addict admittedly, but the authorities as yet have not been able to "get the goods" directly on her.

And there is a small contingent of the Hollywoodites who are sorely addicted to the dangerous dream powders. It is these, in particular, that the Hays investigators are investigating.

A short time ago Federal officers got a "tip" that a very high-salaried, very well-known female star who is a drug user, could be caught with narcotics in her vanity bag. It was impossible to arrest her merely on suspicion however, and to search her without direct cause.

However, she was shadowed for several days by narcotic squad agents, and finally, under the guise of motorcycle policeman, they managed to catch her speeding in her automobile.

She was arrested and taken to police headquarters. There she was searched, and the narcotics, as reported, were found in her handbag.

No publicity ever resulted, due to the quick work of the young woman's attorneys and to the fact that she had unlimited wealth behind her. A heavy fine was paid, and she has been put under surveillance.

If she does not take "the cure" her contract will be broken, she has been told, and she has been given a specified length of time in which to reform.

Narcotics purveyors are believed to have figured singularly in the William Desmond Taylor murder. Certain friends of his were known users of drugs, and it is a police theory that because he threatened to expose members of a drug-selling ring, he was assassinated.

Until comparatively recently a tall, gaunt negro who always carried a small, black, Boston bag was a frequent visitor to several studio "lots," where admittance is difficult and well-nigh impossible.

Yet, when he would appear, he would be admitted without question. Silently, he would meet specified individuals, there would be a hushed conference and a cloistered visit, and he would disappear as silently as he had come.

His calls were made at regular intervals. No questions were asked.

But not long ago he stopped "making his rounds." No one has seen him, and his whereabouts are now unknown.

The casual visitor to Hollywood -- and the past winter has seen any number of curiosity seeking tourists -- believes that, from what he has heard, he can readily see dope dens, and dives of iniquity running openly along Hollywood Boulevard.

This, however, is not the case. A search for sin, made superficially, is without results. Except, perhaps, patrons of some cafes may once in a while see an occasional film player under the influence of liquor.

But Federal investigation has developed the fact that a Hollywood druggist has considerably enriched himself through his sale of bootleg liquor and of narcotics, for which he has a regular "clientele."

And, also, reports show that there is a handsomely-appointed residence located in the heart of Hollywood, where the pungent fumes of opium may be detected seeping out through crevices in windows and doors, that are hung with perfume-saturated drapes and curtains.

Only a small percentage of this establishment's patrons have been film people. A prominent actress and a well-known actor, however, have been "on the books" as its habitués, going there at scheduled intervals and making appointments precisely as if they were seeking consultation with a physician.

The interior of this place is elaborately -- luxuriously furnished. The richest of Oriental rugs cover the floor; the most expensive furniture is everywhere noticeable. Extremely heavy velvet drapes curtain the windows, and from these comes an almost overpowering odor of heavy perfume, put there to drown the deadly, tell-tale fumes of opium.

You go into a large, semi-dark room, appointed like a parlor. Admittance to the establishment is exclusively by card, which a negro maid takes and immediately thereafter disappears.

In the main room one procures the narcotics by swinging back a picture from the wall. Which reveals a small grating, through which the transaction, the "promotion," is made.

And elaborately furnished upstairs rooms provide the "cots" or "bunks" for the smokers to cook and inhale their potion -- and sleep for several hours the weird, untroubled sleep of the hop eater.

It is details like this -- and the film people connected with them -- that the authorities are investigating.

It is this "bad element" which the producers have engaged Mr. Hays to weed out because, although it aggregates only about one per cent of the film colony's population, it is the element, nevertheless, that is getting Hollywood its adverse publicity and causing motion pictures in general to be disregarded by a clean-thinking public.

Hays' first publicly-announced step in his "clean up" campaign was the barring of Roscoe Arbuckle's pictures from the American screen. Not that Arbuckle was actually guilty of the offense of which he was accused, but it was developed during his trial that the fat comedian had offended the proprieties of the nation by being caught in a disgusting revelry.

But Arbuckle, nevertheless, is not professionally dead. He has written, it is said, a story in which Buster Keaton will play. And it is highly probable that he will direct it.

Ever since the moneyed powers-that-be, the financial backers of motion picture interests, tightened their purse strings some months ago and caused the "slump," there has been a desire on the part of producers to rid themselves of contract players -- actors and actresses whose services have been exclusively secured -- for a long-term period -- and, it is said, the movie moguls are only too willing to co-operate in this wholesale housecleaning.

"I was receiving \$2,500 a week on a contract," a male star told me, "and it was evident that my producer did not want to continue hiring me at that figure."

"So he came to me one day and said, 'You are undesirable and your contract will be canceled. We have evidence sufficient to ruin you in the show business -- but, if you cancel your contract and let us re-sign you for, say, \$1,000 weekly, we will protect you and continue to feature you. How about it?'"

"Well -- he had some 'goods' on me. What was I to do? I had to take a 'cut' -- and I am trying to reform, because I realize now what I've really done."

The above is not an everyday case in the studios. However, the private life of every suspected film worker is being investigated by numerous Hays agents who are working under every conceivable disguise.

Not long ago an actress engaged a young man, supposedly an ex-soldier, as a gardener-chauffeur. One evening some friends of hers, playing at a Los Angeles theatre, drove out of her bungalow, bringing with them the requisite amount of liquid refreshment. The party was not a bacchanal nor disgusting to any degree and there was no maudliness. But, during the height of the festivities, the newly engaged chauffeur made his appearance on the pretense of asking his employer a question. On leaving the room he lingered momentarily -- and the next afternoon, for no reason at all, resigned his position in the actress' entourage.

Two days later the young woman was confronted at the studio by a warning from her producer that if any more such parties were held at her house she would find her position seriously endangered.

The investigators are here, there -- everywhere -- in the film colony. It is impossible to penetrate their disguises.

A party of film people were recreating at the Green Mill Gardens, one of Los Angeles' suburban cafes -- a pinnacle of night-life -- when, during the evening, a well-appearing young man approached one of the male members of the party, saying that he had known him in France in the army. A conversation ensued, the young man eventually asked the party if they would like a drink of something stronger than raspberry punch, and at length he was invited to join the group.

Through an adroit system of telescoping he ultimately enabled himself to win the party's confidence in conversation, and received an invitation to call at the film people's homes.

It is similar worm-like methods that the investigators are working. And, in getting confidences, they are procuring various bits of information which they use either directly or indirectly.

Recently there was formed the Federation of Arts, a co-operative organization whose board of control comprises representatives of the Motion Picture Directors' Association, the Screen Writer's Guild, the American Society of Cinematographers, and the Actors' Association.

As an organization, the Federation has put the ban on vice. Vicious actors are finding themselves out of work because the studios will not engage them.

And the Federation pledges its members to eliminate from the arts, professions and allied crafts any individuals who violate the moral spirit by conduct tending to bring disgrace or scandal upon themselves or their fellows.

Hays has been termed the Judge Landis of the films. He has brought into his present affiliation for the same reason that baseball acquired a dictator -- because the game needed a general cleaning up.

It is not, however, because there is an insidious, inside graft rampant wholesale in the picture industry that Mr. Hays is at work. He is, of course, chief censor of all production and is sponsoring a program of more educational pictures. But it is with the private lives of cinema satellites that he is at present concerned.

Unfortunately, perhaps, the public does not separate the screen actor's public from his private life. Screen players really have no private existence. The public calls them by their first names, and feels that it has a right to know what they eat, wear and profess.

And, if So-and-so leads an unmoral private life that is, of course, sufficient reason for him to be ostracized as the tintype idol of the adolescents, according to the contemporary way of thinking.

And that is the problem. That is the reason for the housecleaning in Hollywood.

The picture people realize the necessity of acquiring less unpleasant publicity. Their attitude has changed from one of tolerance of wrong-doers to an almost open hatred of them, for the wise ones of Hollywood realize the seriousness of the situation and have entered into the housecleaning spiritedly.

But the one per cent, the foolish, the wasters -- well, they're beginning to know that their position on the screen is endangered, that their social structure has commenced to topple.

And the majority have taken "the tip."

* from *Movie Weekly*, June 24, 1922

The Litany Of A Movie Director

From newly-made stars who acquire the temper of a locoed grizzly,
And think that it's "artistic temperament;"
From fluffy little baby-eyed ingenues who
just hate publicity --
Like a cat does a steady diet of rich cream!
From Eminent Authors who clutter up the
"set" under the delusion
That they are being of invaluable assistance
to the production;
From young leading men who have just had
their first interview
And consequently think that John Barrymore
Isn't so much after all;
From prop men whose reluctance to get you
the properties you want
Would almost make you think the cost came
out of their own pockets;
From stage hands who are over in the corner
Shooting craps
Every blooming time you happen to want their
services;
From all these things and many more,
Oh Lord deliver us!

A Movie Fan's Litany

From man-killing, female gun-women who
think that
They ought to go into the movies the day after
The jury has acquitted them of the murder of
their late hubbies;
From gum-chewing professional flappers
Whose idea of feminine emancipation
Consist of reading Freud and consuming
Fatimas;
From directors who use the "soft focus"
effect
Until the story seems like "A Foggy Night in
London,"
From ham comedians of the "goo-ey" variety
who think
That humor is composed of equal parts of Molasses,
Bread dough, and very liquid pastry;
From supposed Chinamen with pig-tails and

kimonas
 Who have the map of Ireland written on their
 faces;
 From spectacular plays supposedly staged in
 Arabia
 But with scenic backgrounds suspiciously
 reminiscent of Hollywood;
 From a mere handful of immature, irresponsi-
 ble players
 Who, by their asinine acts, bring an entire
 industry into disrepute;
 From ubiquitous boards of State Movie Censors
 Whose innate incompetence is exceeded only
 by their sublime conceit;
 From newly-made masculine screen stars
 whose hat size
 Has increased out of all proportion to their
 skull capacities;
 From all of these things and many more,
 Oh Lord, deliver us!

* from *Movie Weekly*, July 1, 1922

Double Crossed By A Friend Shatters Mabel Normand's Life

By Truman B. Handy

What is more fatal than a woman spurned?

And what is more terrible than the awakening to unfaithfulness to Love's pledge?

When motion pictures were first gaining recognition, there was a particularly beautiful young artists' model in New York City who decided to cast her destiny with them.

She had wonderful, soulful brown eyes -- the sort that could either sparkle and shine or else flash swift, terrible fire -- and part of her was her quick, Irish wit.

She was Mabel Normand.

And she was one of the first to gain recognition and fame on the screen. And everyone thought of her as a buxom, happy, ebullient girl full of the joy of life.

A comedienne she was, essentially, because she felt comedy in her soul.

In those very early days she struggled and worked as a member of Griffith's first stock company. Finally she met Mack Sennett, who, himself, was starting in to mould his career and his fortune.

He was attracted to her. She was so fresh, so unspoiled! Her heart was as big as all out-doors, and, too, she had the real ability that he was looking for.

He engaged her, and together they started the now-defunct Keystone company. And Mabel Normand was the first girl in pictures to fascinate the populace with photographs of her shapely thirty-six in a one-piece swimming suit.

It is not surprising that Sennett should have fallen in love with the piquant Normand. And he did.

And she was his inspiration for many months -- months during which both laid plans for the wedding-that-was-to-be.

The best that was in Mabel came to light in her early comedies -- during the interval she played with Chaplin, who was just being "discovered," and with Fatty Arbuckle.

She was all ebullience, all fun. Audiences thrilled at her girlish buxomness, at her large, sloe-shaped brown eyes, at her titillant smile.

For she was in love -- and it showed in her beauty and her performance.

One day she met an erstwhile friend -- a girl whom she had known back in New York as an actress trying to get a start.

Things hadn't been going so well for this woman. She had had rough sledding, and the effects had told on her. And it was because she seemed so instantly pathetic that Mabel's heart went out to her.

And Miss Normand befriended her and helped her to get on her feet -- and even went so far as to get her a position at the studio.

It is a strange truth that the injured party is the last to hear rumors of gossip that concerns him. It was this way with Mabel. She had no idea that people were talking and saying strange things whenever her name was mentioned, or, more particularly, when the name of her friend was whispered.

Nor did she have any reason to doubt that Sennett was in love with her. Nor was she even suspicious.

But, one day, someone apprised her of the fact that Sennett's affections were being claimed by the woman she had formerly befriended.

She couldn't -- wouldn't -- believe it and went to find out.

And she was destined to learn the truth, for her "friend" was in Sennett's company.

The realization came suddenly to Miss Normand. She was heartbroken. She tried to plead with her former woman friend, but this was futile. And when she went to the door, her arm was caught in its jamb when the portal was slammed shut on her and broken.

From then on she began to change from a rollicking girl into a disillusioned, saddened woman.

And today there is, in Mabel Normand, a strange, underlying sadness to her jollity. She has recovered somewhat from that first shock -- but she will never be the same trusting, light-hearted person she was when she did her first series of comedies.

She has had another sorrow. Just recently.

In fact, the assassination of William D. Taylor has left a deep impress upon her.

During the district attorney's examination of witnesses immediately after the director's murder she was a solemn, sorrowful figure. It is true that she figured prominently in the newspapers as having been one of his close friends.

He was perhaps her best friend -- a platonic, fatherly pal to whom she could go when she wanted advice or new books or spiritual comfort.

And the tears that she shed over his body -- at the inquest, at the funeral -- were not glycerine, and today, even, she becomes choked and sorrowful when his name is mentioned.

Yet, through Fate's strange stroke, Mabel Normand continues to lead as a comedienne. On the screen she is rollicking -- a fitful "Molly-O," an effervescent "Susanna." She has no end of pranks to play and capers to cut dramatically, but in her own, her real life, she is a young woman who reads serious literature and thinks serious thoughts.

Perhaps it is because she knows Life's tragic side that she can portray its comedy, for comedy is merely an exaggeration of what would otherwise be tragedy.

But Mabel has never married, nor has she ever declared her intention of marrying.

And perhaps it is because she knows too much about men ever again to fall really in love.

* from *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 6, 1922

Mabel Normand Idol of London

London's reception of Mabel Normand is overwhelming the American movie star, according to Perry Charles of Brooklyn and Los Angeles, who is a member of Miss Normand's vacation party.

"She is their beloved 'Mibel,' and her rest here, such as a distinct fizzle," writes Charles. "For instance, after racing from 6:30 in the morning of June 23 to keep up with her rate list. 'Mible' led a party of London's best down in the Limehouse district to fulfill her dreams of visiting the settings of Thomas Burke's novels. It was an hour before midnight and foggy, but she was everywhere recognized and accorded such a tremendous reception as to amount to a mobbing. With difficulty she was saved from injury by the crush of her lowly admirers as she stood in the misty, dimly-lighted corner and shook hands all around."

Miss Normand's "Fan" mail in England has reached the proportion of eight to ten thousand letters a day, according to Charles.

* from *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 29, 1922

Mabel Normand Breaks Heart of Prince Ibrahim of Egypt; Cleopatra's Throne No Lure

Paris, July 23 -- Another Oriental royal romance of interest to San Franciscans and in which, as in the last one of its kind, the royal wooer has been turned down by an American woman with whom he offered to share his princely honors, has come to light here through the rejection of Prince Ibrahim, nephew of the Khedive of Egypt.

Mabel Normand, the popular motion picture actress, is the woman in the case. It was to Mabel, long a San Francisco favorite, that Prince Ibrahim offered his heart and hand.

Mabel turned the prince down, gently but firmly. She told him she had sat on so many property in the movies that living in the shadow of one had lost its glamour for her and that while she was perfectly willing to be as much of a sister to him as possible for an American girl to be an Egyptian prince, she must decline matrimony, Mohammedan or otherwise.

It was the same sort of answer that Mrs. Maryan Andrews Bruguierre Hewitt recently gave to the Shah of Persia when she sent him back to his native land bewailing her failure to accept his offer. Then Mrs. Hewitt, who was the widow of Dr. Pedar Sather Bruguierre of San Francisco, went right off and became the wife of Baron Robert d'Englander.

In Mabel's case it is not a matter of another romance, they say. It was just because she could not see life in a harem, whether as the only incumbent, or one of several.

The prince, who recently visited San Francisco with his secretary Blink McClosky, a former pugilist said he had observed American customs and was willing to follow them.

He had visited Hollywood and had mingled with the best people there, so he knew the ropes. But even so, Mabel declined.

"I will give up my princely rank and stop being a Mohammedan," Prince Ibrahim is said to have offered as a final inducement.

The Mabel explained to him. She told him he was a nice fellow and a good pal and all that sort of thing, but that matrimonially she could not even think of him.

They had been seen much in public together. In restaurants of Paris and driving in the Bois, but the frequently repeated assurance of the prince's secretary, given in San Francisco during the visit there, that "The prince is a hot sport and a good guy, but as for matrimony, he is off the dames," had reached here and was taken to indicate that it was friendship and nothing more that attracted Ibrahim.

Now, that friends to whom Prince Ibrahim and Mabel confided the story of the broken romance have whispered it, the whole world may be taken into the secret.

Mabel is not lured by the throne of Cleopatra.

* from *Capt. Billy's Whiz Bang*, August 1922

It was rumored that Prince Mohammed Ali Ibrahim, who recently came from Egypt to visit New York, was soon to wed Mabel Withee, Broadway musical star, the Prince having bestowed on Mabel a diamond platinum plaque valued at many thousands of dollars. However, it seems the King of the Pharaohs broke a date with Mabel recently and has been bestowing admiring glances elsewhere.

It is said that the Prince is "sweet" on Mabel Normand, too, and that Mabel recently wired the Prince that she was soon coming east and "not to fall in love with anybody else before she arrived."

Mabel Normand always could smell diamonds from afar!

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, August 6, 1922

" Ormsby Burton

London, July 19--Mabel Normand has been to London, and she could have had as much publicity as that given here to Mary Pickford, had she wanted it. But she preferred to keep out of the limelight, mainly because she expected everybody would be wanting her to tell all she knew about the murder of William D. Taylor. While in London therefore she declined dinners and interviews as much as possible, and just went about seeing the sights and buying things. From London she went to Paris, where in one of the very few interviews she has given she told a reporter that she was enamored of London, that she loved its policemen and its climate, and that she was "going right back there" as soon as she could.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, August 20, 1922

" Ormsby Burton

London, August 4 -- Mabel Normand, when she arrived in London, made it clear to her interviewers that she was not engaged to be married and that she had no present thought of getting married. On the top of this pronouncement came the report that she had betrothed herself to Prince Ibrahim. This she now denies with equal emphasis. She is not engaged to any one, she says.

There is some hustle about Mabel Normand. The other day she was in a hurry to get to Paris. She reached the London office of the Lep Aerial to book an aeroplane seat for the Gay City, only to find that the last passenger auto to the aerodrome for the last aeroplane to France that day had gone.

But a special car was rushed to the air station and she arrived just in time to leap aboard the flying machine.

* from *Pictures and Picturegoer*, September 1922

" Elsie Codd

Seeing Limehouse with Mabel

As everybody knows, Mabel Normand is a world-famous film comedienne. To be strictly accurate, she is THE most famous film comedienne, for as "Keystone Mabel," she had romped her joyous way to her stardom before most of her fellow twinklers were even heard of. And, being a comedienne, Mabel is just naturally rather an unexpected little person, chockful of surprises.

Most lady film stars who treat themselves to that long-promised trip to little old Europe usually travel whit whole trunkfuls of scrumptious feminine garments, incidentally allowing a few empty ones as well for a visit to Paris. The London porters must have found Mabel's baggage uncommonly heavy to handle, for most of HER trunks were filled with books, and not of the light variety at that.

So it didn't surprise me in the least, when I looked in to see her at the Ritz, to find her, as usual, buried in a book.

"You're just in time," she greeted me. "I've ordered the taxi, and we're going right down to Chinatown to see all these wonderful things I've been reading about."

I picked up the book from the chaise-lounge to look at the title, "Limehouse Nights," by Thomas Burke.

"Do it right now" is a typically American motto; and I am tempted to believe it must have originated with Mabel. She told me whilst she adjusted a smart little turban and scrambled into wrap that she had just been re-reading some of the stories, and felt she "couldn't wait another minute."

We drove through the glittering West End thoroughfares, with all of their jolly traffic and the bustle of a great city preparing for its evening's amusement, whilst Mabel gaily chatted at my side, telling me sketchily what she had been doing since her arrival in England.

Then we crossed one of the bridges and plunged into that darker London which lies to the south side of the river. Followed an interminable ride through a bewildering maze of mean and dimly-lighted streets, till at last the car slowed down in what seemed to be some main thoroughfare between Pennyfields and Limehouse Causeway.

"We'd better get out now and walk," our escort suggested. "A car in these parts is likely to attract too much attention. I'll tell the driver to wait for us here."

We wandered up the Causeway, then back again down Pennyfields towards the river. London's Chinatown is rather an unpretentious affair compared with that of Los Angeles, where there is a beautiful temple tucked away behind a maze of crooked streets, and where some of the little restaurants have their balconies so brightly decorated that you can almost imagine yourself under Eastern instead of Western skies. Limehouse has an atmosphere all its own. The unfathomable spirit of the East broods over its drab streets and narrow alleys.

A little Chinese two-year-old was seated on a doorstep in Pennyfields, the only touch of youth and freshness we saw in those mean streets. She was dressed in a spotless suit of white "rompers" and was mothering a Teddy bear, much like any British baby.

"Isn't she just cute, the darling!" Mabel cried, and stopped for a little chat. For a moment the Teddy bear was forgotten, whilst the child appraised her visitor with a pair of solemn eyes. She evidently didn't understand a word of what Mabel was saying, but she must have decided that it was something nice, for gradually the little face crinkled into a smile, and the chubby fingers clutched at something bright and sparkling on Mabel's dress.

Babies, after all, are much the same all the world over.

We finished up the evening with a Chinese restaurant. Mabel isn't the sort of person who is content with a superficial impression of the mere outside of things. She wanted to see a real Limehouse "interior," and she wasn't going back to the Ritz until she had seen what she wanted. Diplomatically our escorted steered us back to the less dimly-lighted thoroughfare, where a policeman stood on guard, and halted before a small eating-house.

A brief argument ensued on the subject of Miss Normand's jewelry. The expedition had been undertaken entirely on the spur of the moment, and the man of the party was at some pains to convince her that, though diamonds are all very well at the Ritz, it was but reasonable to suppose that a certain element of risk was entailed by wearing them in Limehouse. Mabel, however, thought otherwise, and absolutely declined to entertain any suggestion that she should "pop them into her handbag" by way of precaution.

So far, she had remained unrecognized [sic], but during this little discussion I noticed that two small street arabs had crept up and were staring at Mabel with very suspicious interest.

"It's Mybel!" ejaculated the one in a whisper, hoarse with suppressed excitement.

"T'ayn't!" The other was trying hard to sound skeptical, though obviously half-convinced.

"I tell yer it is!"

Two small noses were immediately flattened against the window when we took our seats at the plain deal table inside. After a time they disappeared. The owners had evidently pattered away to impart the "scoop" to their friends.

The sensation of the evening, in fact, was provided by Chinatown's Cockney population. Those two small boys had not neglected their opportunity. On leaving the restaurant, Mabel found herself suddenly hailed with a delighted "Mybel! Mybel! Hello, Mybel!"

A small crowd had assembled and had been eagerly waiting for her to re-appear. They were not by any means a classy or fashionable gathering, but they gave their screen idol a right royal welcome, bombarding her with questions. "What's it like in America, Mybel?" "Is Mybel yer real name?" "How old are yer?"

And there was no getting Mabel away from them. We should never have got her back to the Ritz that night if the good-natured policeman, who had hitherto discreetly looked another way, had not eventually decided that it was high time to save her from her friends. They gave her a cheer as the taxi slowly moved away, and she waved them a last good-bye.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, September 8, 1922

"Louella Parsons

Europe having received the thrill of its life in the appearance of Mabel Normand at Deauville and other famous places, the young lady is now on her way home. She sailed yesterday on the Majestic, and if she cares to write her experience she will have plenty to tell. Mabel always gets the most out of every adventure.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, September 13, 1922

[interview with Mabel Normand on her arrival from Europe] ...Mabel Normand said she had been away six weeks, most of the time in Paris, resting. She was now ready to go West after a stay of a week in New York to begin making a picture with an English scenario, its name yet undecided, but something on the order of "Molly O" During the voyage she appeared each day in the big swimming pool on the Majestic, which she praised highly. Did she have a gallery? She did. She was surprised, she said, to learn that Roscoe Arbuckle had not progressed in the settlement of his affairs before the public and she was pained to learn of his illness in China.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, September 13, 1922

Scouts The Old World For Scenes

New York -- Mabel Normand's homecoming today was a trifle eclipsed by the arrival of the gorgeous Pola Negri on the same liner, the Majestic. Miss Normand returning from a vacation of more than two months in Europe, however, had nothing but kind words for the Polish film star, with whom she became rather well acquainted during the passage.

Mack Sennett's comedienne greeted Ship News reporters with a reference to Miss Negri, who, she said, was "the prettiest thing I have ever seen."

Miss Normand said she was going at once to Los Angeles and the "lot" to begin work in a new six-reel comedy drama that has been several months in preparation.

"They were so good to me in London, Paris, Berlin, Monte Carlo, Naples and Rome," she said, "that in a sort of way I hated to leave. It was my first vacation, you know, and my first trip to Europe. But it is not going to be my last.

"I hope to make a picture in either Paris or London. Mr. Sennett told me to go over both thoroughly and I have a notebook crammed full of records of natural settings, historic and romantic that our newer country cannot match.

"Yes, I have written a book, with just an effort to set forth my own impressions. I have tried to make it anything but encyclopedic.

"I found Paris less frivolous than I expected. And it takes mighty strong will power to pull one's self away from Monte Carlo if you have the run of luck at the tables that I was having. It seemed that everything I touched turned into gold. The Dolly sisters who accompanied me there from Paris were extremely lucky, too.

"The European men? Well, I didn't meet very many. I was really too busy trying to see everything at once, and mother as a chaperone is mother.

"I did little shopping in London and Paris, but bought a few frocks and hats. I prefer to patronize American designers.

"I saw considerable of Sophie Tucker and Harry Tate when I was in London, and Max Linder in Paris, beside Vesta Victoria, Harry Lauder, Marie Dressler and the Dolly sisters.

"And I saw a lot of movie shows over there, too. I tried to make a study of working conditions in their studios, but the industry was slack and slowing up due to the bad weather in London and the heat in Paris, but they have a program in the fall that will keep them to capacity.

"They especially enjoy comedies over there, especially American ones. Chaplin, Lloyd, Keaton and the rest usually fill their houses.

"What impressed me more than anything else was the extreme politeness of the European, especially the London bobbie. They seem always to want so to please. I sometimes wondered if all their solicitation for anyone and everyone was really sincere."

After a stay of about a week in New York, Miss Normand will go to Los Angeles to begin making a picture with an English scenario, its name, yet undecided, but something on the order of "Molly-O."

During the voyage she appeared each day in the big swimming pool on the Majestic, which she praised highly. Did she have a gallery? Other passengers said she did. She was surprised, she said, to learn that Roscoe Arbuckle had not progressed in the settlement of his affairs before the public and she was pained to learn of his illness in China.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, September 16, 1922

Film Star Back Home In Mix-Up

New York -- It is not so much that Perry M. Charles, publicity agent has brought suit in Superior Court, Brooklyn, to recover \$2940 for salary and services rendered here and in Europe for Miss Mabel Normand, noted cinema star, that will cause the actress any loss of sleep or worry, but her "beloved" publicity agent has gone further. He has caused all her trunks, containing the wonderful wardrobe she brought back from Europe a few days ago, to be attached by a deputy sheriff, who thought his official mission would not be properly fulfilled unless he also attached the collection of the jewelry Miss Normand had placed in the safe of the hotel where she is staying, which he did.

Mr. Charles reproduces in his complaint a few of the telegrams Miss Normand sent him from Los Angeles, while he was in Canada employed by Harry Tate. One message dated April 14, 1922, in part read.

"Perry dear, wire me collect, your plans. Received wire this morning. Wonderful if you are in England when I arrive to meet me. Without you I'll be lost. Love and thanks to the Tates. Is Harry paying your passage? Wire details. If you need money wire me. When do you sail? Might be able to go along. Want you to work for me. Anything you say goes about salary. Might be better your going ahead to fix things up, then return to America with me, London, Paris, Berlin, etc. Love. Mabel,"

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, September 16, 1922

Aid Attaches Mabel's Trunk

New York -- All of Mabel Normand's trunks with the dazzling wardrobe she brought from France a few days ago, including jewelry which she had placed in the safe of the Hotel Ambassador, where she is staying, were attached by an unsympathetic deputy sheriff today.

Her publicity agent, Perry M. Charles, was the source of the movie star's embarrassment, having brought suit in the Supreme Court, Brooklyn to recover \$2940 for salary and services rendered in America and Europe. In his complaint, the press agent reproduced honeyed messages from Miss Normand sent to him from Los Angeles while he was in Canada, some of the phrases quoted being: "Anything you say goes about salary;" "if you need money, wire me;" "Wonderful if you are in England when I arrive to meet me. Would be lost without you."

In London, Charles said, he prepared the way for Miss Normand, introduced her on her arrival to dramatic editors and hosts of other people, then she sent him back to New York to continue the good work in which he was.

All he got for this aside from loving messages, he declared was \$1100 for expenses which actually totaled \$1340.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, September 17, 1922

Mabel Hee-Hees at Perry's Suit

A legal battle of much warmth is promised tomorrow when Mabel Normand, the vivacious film star, answers to the suit of Perry M. Charles, her former press agent, for a matter of \$2,940 back salary and several hundred dollars expenses, which he alleges is due him. On Friday a deputy sheriff attached several trunks of new gowns, which the actress brought back with her from her recent trip to Paris, and also commandeered all of Miss Normand's jewelry, now reposing in the safe of the Hotel Ambassador, where the star is living during her stay in New York.

In the meanwhile nobody seems to know just what Miss Normand is doing to oppose the suit. She refused consistently to be interviewed yesterday on any point of the action, saying she knew nothing of it.

Miss Normand's gowns may have been attached, but there was no evidence of it yesterday, when she flitted through the lobby of the Ambassador. The star was clothed in white from head to toe. Of what material the gown was composed the reporter who was sent to interview her could not determine. He caught only a fleeting glimpse. He probably wouldn't have known anyway.

The actress was very loath to talk. The reporter, talking from the lobby to Miss Normand in her suite, was told she didn't know anything about the affair. After a short conversation, however, she decided to come down to the lobby to talk the matter over.

After a time, Miss Normand did come down, but escorted by a young man. She started out as the reporter arose to speak. Seeing him, she turned nervously, giggled and ran out to her automobile on the arm of her companion.

Miss Normand's predicament is due to the suit brought by Charles, after he found "honeyed words" didn't pay him for his work. According to his charges, she has failed to pay him for his work with anything more tangible than a series of telegrams filled with pleasant words. He decided good cheer was a poor substitute for dollars, and now seeks \$2,940 in back salary and several hundred dollars for expenses.

Charles admits receiving some money for his offices in Miss Normand's behalf, but declares it was very little, and nothing to what he was entitled to. "Men must live," is the opinion of Charles, and when a press agent gives up a perfectly good job as publicity man for a musical comedy to undertake the same sort of work for a film star, he expects to be paid.

Charles submitted to the court several telegrams he said were sent him by the actress. He said he was in Toronto last April when Miss Normand, who was in Los Angeles, wired him:

"Perry Dear--Wire me collect your plan. Received wire this A. M. Wonderful if you are in England when I arrive to meet me. Without you I will be lost. Love and thanks to the Tates. Is Harry (Tate) paying your passage? Wire details. If you need money, wire me. When do you sail? Might be able to go along. Want you to work for me. Anything you say goes about salary. Might be better your going ahead to fix things up, then return to America with me. London, Paris, Berlin, etc. When arrive New York will telephone you. Love, Mabel."

Charles submitted another telegram he says he got on May 9 as follows:

"Perry Dear--Can I phone you anywhere and at what time Wednesday? Send me straight wire. Also insist upon paying for phone. You are beloved by me. Telephone me Wilshire 7226. Love, Perry, always."

Charles alleges that he considered himself employed and sailed from Montreal for Southampton. He did some preliminary work for her there, he says, and when she arrived later introduced her to theatrical, dramatic and sporting editors, reporters and others.

* from *Movie Weekly*, September 23, 1922

Mabel Normand Drilled In Royal Etiquette

By Herself

Note: Mabel Normand has just returned from a trip to Europe. While in London, she received the "royal command" and prepared herself to visit King George, or Queen Mary, or Princess Mary, or the Prince of Wales when... Anyway, Mabel tells you something of royal etiquette. How does it all appeal to you free and easy Americans?

I had been in London about a week, taking things very quietly, just "sight-seeing," when like a bolt from the blue "it" came.

"It" was all new to me.

The hospitals of London at that time made a "drive" for funds and it was decided to hold a huge charity ball in aid. At a meeting of the committee, at which Princess Mary was chairman, the council's list of Americans present in London was gone into and when the "m's" had been exhausted they came to the "N's" and Normand.

The Princess expressed a desire to see what I really looked like in the flesh and a lady in waiting was sent post haste to my apartment at the Ritz to "rush me over."

That was disappointment "Number One."

The evening previous I had visited Limehouse. Always a lover of Thomas Burke's books especially his "Limehouse Nights" and "Whispering Windows," I had determined to see for myself the actual conditions and environments so ably expressed in his works.

So I just took a taxi and told the driver to let me off in the heart of the "slums."

I can't begin to tell you now the sights that met my eyes.

Little did I realize that I would be recognized or never for a moment would I have dreamed of going, but somehow or other they instantly began calling me "Miabel" in their quaint cockney dialect, and, instead of a quiet little stroll about, it rapidly assumed the proportions of a parade. And although I enjoyed every moment of it, the object of my visit was ruined. So I picked a few small chaps from the crowd who promised to show me the "real" Limehouse the next afternoon.

So there I was in the slums when I was supposed to be at Buckingham Palace. When I finally came in for dinner, my secretaries were terribly excited over the "Royal Command." In England, more than any other European country, there is a decided class distinction. You are rated according to the amount of wealth you command, your previous condition of servitude, your title and who, what, and why your forefathers happened to be doing.

You either have your club in the Pall Mall or the Piccadilly district, or the Tottenham Court Road section. You are supposed to wear your evening dress every night or you can just "plain" go about; you carry your stick, yellow gloves, top hat, or you are "out of order" if you don't. They look with holy horror if you do certain things in one place, or smile and "egg you on" if you do the same identical thing-ama-jigs in your own "place."

But the dream of them all is to receive a "Royal Command." The theatricals count with hushed and bated breath when the name of Harry Tate, Vesta Victoria, Vesta Tilley, Harry Lauder, or some other artist's list of "commands" is pronounced.

The press of England devotes pages to society notes and happenings. What they had on, who was there, what they said and why.

And the readers revel in it.

If I was to be very American and slangy I was "sitting pretty" that evening.

The next morning at an early hour a telephone call was to the effect that one of the ladies-in-waiting to the Queen was at my disposal for instructions on royal etiquette. It had been decided upon that I was to appear at either Buckingham Castle or the official home or castle of either the Princess Mary or the Prince of Wales at the first favorable opportunity.

A "Royal Command" sounds terrible, doesn't it? Especially when you don't know what it's all about. Was I supposed to do my Keystone "stunts" or just act like "Mickey" or "Molly-O?" What was I to wear? And talk about? I laugh now when I think of it all. It was so simple. A plain dress, white, elbow sleeved-length, the skirt either short or long, according to the style that I preferred, a picture hat or a small toque -- in fact my everyday wear. If "It" was to happen in the afternoon, an afternoon frock. If "It" was in the evening, an evening gown.

I was to be attended by a lady of my own choice, who was supposed to act as my escort. If Princess Mary, my instructions were to this effect. "It" would be in the afternoon sometime, the exact hour to be fixed well beforehand. The Princess is not as worldly wise as the Prince of Wales and certain definite subjects were listed for conversation. Los Angeles, the moving picture industry, my impression of London and little things like that.

The Princess is attended by several ladies of the court who are to stand a few feet back as my lady was supposed to do. Tea was to be served.

If the Prince of Wales, things were different.

I had waited for hours at my Ritz apartments that faced Piccadilly the day he returned from his world's tour and I shall never forget the whole-hearted and sincere greeting that met him. The London press made much-ado about a little talk I had with one of Lord Northcliff's representatives that day, in which I said that the Prince would make a wonderful leading man for the "movies!"

This was brought to his attention and he seemed to enjoy it. I was to be escorted to his estate by my lady-in-waiting. As was to be the case with the Princess, I was not to talk on any other subject of conversation than the one broached by their majesties. As the Prince had visited the United States, it was a mutual subject as was the industry I was in, so it was decided that those two were to be the main subjects.

But the Prince is a carefree chap, a man in his own rights and not given too much to court formality. When I entered the presence of royalty I was to advance slowly, make a curtsy to the Princess, just the least semblance of a bow.

If it was to be the Prince, he would shake hands.

It was a former rule that you were supposed to back out of their presence, but that has since died a natural death, due to the fact that certain high personages of royalty, clad in long and sweeping trains, had experienced quite some difficulty in walking backwards without first taking lessons from some expert contortionist. The rule now in vogue is for their majesties to leave the room first and you gracefully follow. For to turn your back on royalty or to be seated in their presence while they are standing is one of the unpardonable sins of court.

If "It" was to be at Buckingham Palace before their Majesties the King and Queen, everything was to be worked in batches of four or five. I was to be assembled with a few others in an anti-chamber and escorted by a lady-in-waiting to the Queen into the royal chamber. A few brief words to each and then out.

Then with all the plans in the making, my high expectations were dashed to the ground and asunder by the murder of Sir Henry Wilson. This happened exactly two days before "It" was to happen. Court functions, court society and everything connected with any royal event were immediately canceled in due reverence to that wonderful man who was so cruelly assassinated.

But my plans call for a return visit to England in the very near future and I shall be able to tell you all just what it feels like to be "received," for "It" is going to happen then.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1922

After having played pretty girls from many different climes, Mabel Normand is about to return to the Mack Sennett studios in Edendale with a concrete knowledge of how these really look and act.

Mabel has been a pretty Parisienne on the screen; now she knows what a real Parisienne is, for she has visited Paris.

Mabel has been a daughter of Madrid; now she knows just what a Spanish senorita is, for she has toured Spain and visited all the large cities.

It isn't of record that Mabel was ever maid of the Netherlands, though it is probable she has played the part in the old days of Biograph beginnings in comedy: but anyway Mabel knows what windmills and dikes are like, for she has toured Holland too.

Italy was also the scene of Mabel's travels and she created a sensation in England, particularly in London where she was taken in by actors and other artistic folk, and feted until she had to beg off and plead for leisure and rest.

With these memories to contemplate and with the consciousness of having enjoyed a wonderful rest, Miss Normand, star of "Mickey," "Molly-O" and now "Suzanna," shortly to be released by Associated First National, is expected back at the Sennett lot within a few weeks.

It is said that as soon as she has "rested up from her vacation," Miss Normand will begin work on another five-reel photodrama to be made under the supervision of Mack Sennett, directed by F. Richard Jones and released by Associated First National.

Announcement will soon follow concerning the nature of Miss Normand's next story. Whether it will be an original plot developed expressly for her or whether it will be taken from some novel already in existence, is not stated.

* from *Exhibitor's Trade Review*, October 28, 1922

• From a speech of Will Rogers, delivered on October 13, 1922 to the Associated Motion Picture Advertisers in New York

"Not a woman in New York City -- I don't except any one -- does more quiet charitable work than Mabel Normand. There never was a list, whether for the benefit of an injured stage hand or electrician or for some larger and more general purpose, that Mabel didn't head. I don't say these things from any personal bias. We held a big charitable affair out there which Mr. Frohman put on and which was attended by all the big stars, but Mabel Normand got the biggest reception of any one."

* from *Photoplay*, November 1922

Mabel Normand has returned from Paris, with a little style show all her own. Mabel bought more new frocks and hats than she can count. In her Paris apartment at the Hotel Crillon, Mabel received.²⁰⁰ All the smartest shops sent their representatives up to the American film star.

Mabel sat on the floor while the mannequins paraded before her. When she liked a costume she said, "I'll take it," just like that -- dress, hat, shoes and all. And she liked most of them.

Oh, well, with her salary of eight thousand a week Mabel can afford a few of the luxuries of life.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 12, 1922

[Extract of letter to the editor from Myrtle Wright of New York City]...Mabel Normand used to be a great favorite of mine. Then for an extended period she appeared in the most hopelessly colorless films. I kept going to see her, each time hoping and believing that if I were persevering enough I'd be sure to strike something good, eventually. It took a long time and a lot of persistence, but finally I saw "Molly O," which was the best part Mabel Normand had had for a year or more. Just when things began to look bright again, and I thought: well at last she has decided to give us something worthwhile, away she went to Europe and ain't been seen since!

I had the same feeling about Charlie Chaplin. When I went to see him in "Pay Day," which seems to me to have been sometime last April, although I didn't like the picture as much as "Shoulder Arms" or "The Kid," nevertheless I was somewhat compensated by the fact that it was in two reels, and I thought that probably meant that we would hear from him more often if he had returned to the two-reel field. But I haven't seen or heard of anything new from him since then, except, of course, his reissues. These are always refreshing, but we have so few examples of real talent in our American picture firmament that it seems a shame to allow people who really like Chaplin and miss

²⁰⁰ To be read: Mabel "received" her guests.

Normand to remain idle. The comedy field really is being neglected and heaven knows what the poor world needs right now is laughter!

* from *Picture-Play*, December 1922

Memories on My Own Screen

By Norbert Lusk:

Part I

Many persons know Mabel Normand. She welcomes acquaintances as easily as she curves her cupid's bow with a lipstick; but few can say they truly know her. This gives me a proper opening to say that I do. That is, my knowledge is enough to make me fond. It is no new happiness.

Five years ago (in 1917), when she was made a Goldwyn star, the prospect of meeting mellifluous Mabel was quite enough to give me tremors of anticipation, even though I was no younger than I ought to have been. Not only was she on the crest of the glory that was Goldwyn, but her name sparkled with reminiscent associations. Years before, when she was a mere anonymity -- her eloquent eyes and sure sense of fun had won my interest in Biograph and Vitagraph comedies, the latter with John Bunny. As a tantalizing typist in a one-reel comedy I remembered her sidelong glances and saucy scorn. I knew meeting Mabel Normand would not be dull routine. It wasn't by a long shot dull.

"I haven't time. I'm too busy. Later, maybe." She flung out this hope when accosted, red-cloaked, in the studio corridor, where I had been sent to worm from her information to be used in advertising her pictures. Then she passed on, leaving me to make the best of her retreat, to exclaim at her diminutiveness and startling big eyes. But the tide of defeat turned in the studio restaurant where, fortunately, I had sought reviving tea. She came in with Mae Marsh and danced toward me, an old friend.

Then began an "interview" which she made absurdly comic when led on by my puerile queries.

Q. "What do you like best to do?"

A. "Pinch babies and twist their legs. (Don't dare publish this. People wouldn't understand.)"

Q. "What do you most enjoy?"

A. "Dark windy days when trees break and houses blow down."

Q. "Favorite flower?"

A. "Weeds -- if I buy them myself. Orchids otherwise. (But I'll take anything.)"

Q. "Ideal man?"

A. "A brutal Irishman who chews tobacco and lets the world know it. (Say a Gibson man. It's more refined.)"

Q. "Favorite food?"

A. "Chocolate cake, iced and inch high. (Fat or no fat, I love it)"

This went on, broken by Mabel's effervescing giggles. On November tenth Mabel was given such a birthday cake as she hungered for and thanked me fervidly, rapturously, like a child. She said she'd rather have had it than a pint of pearls. Be that as it may, the chocolate cake made us friends, though when she reads this she'll call it slandering her finer feelings. She'll protest the cake had nothing to do with it. She's a great kidder.

It is this habit that stands in the way of understanding her. She jests at all times. When she becomes serious she finds, to her discomfiture, that she is still laughed at. For her attempts at gravity are likely to be mirthful to others. I have never met any one more incorrigibly prankish, nor more high-spirited and volatile. Naturally the sympathies of such a person are easily roused and, when one is as generous as Mabel, lavishly expressed. She spends money with the superb gesture of a runaway youngster playing hookey from school. An instance, one of many, comes to mind.

During the war I introduced to her at dinner Lieutenant Vladimir, attached to a visiting war mission. Battle-scarred yet naive and childlike, with a droll misunderstanding of English, he inspired Mabel to be her gayest most bewitching self.

"If you don't let this be *my* dinner I'll go home," she whispered. Rather than that heartbreak I gave her permission to buy the restaurant if she liked. To prove herself queen of the situation she ordered nine cocktails at once, for the three of us, and a hundred cigarettes. For dessert the waiter mustn't forget a Baked Alaska. Because it cost more than anything else.

"Poor fellow looks as if he'd made a round trip to Hades. Make him take the cigarettes home with him."

In the course of dinner so deeply did his scars -- and medals -- work on her sympathies that Mabel decided the soldier ought to be awarded something from her own hands.

"Don't you need a wrist-watch, Vlady? Let me give you one."

"But please, Mees Mobble," he flushed embarrassed, "a rose it is the same thing."

According to Mabel it was no time for floral tributes. Something more useful to a man was in mind $\frac{3}{4}$ a traveling clock, or brushes, or a flask. I suggested to appease her generous impulse. It was forgotten, I thought, by the time we jogged through the leafy darkness of the park in a victoria, especially as the world-famous star was trying to coach the foreigner in Indian war whoops. But Mabel Normand never forgets. Though she didn't see Vladimir again one day came a package from her. Clock, brushes, flask -- she had sent all. I recalled what he said that night on her doorstep after she flitted inside.

"English I speak very bad, but character I read ver-y nice," he stammered. "Mees Mobble has beautiful heart. Better I cannot put it. A beautiful heart."

Experienced actress that she is, Mabel is more than all heart. Her grasp and understanding of her work are too strong and sure to be the promptings of anything but her brain. Left to herself her choice of a story would be reasonably certain to please her public equally as her bright imagination is in devising "business." She has virtually grown up with the movies and brings to her work the capability, deft, expert, of a veteran artist. After a single reading of an involved scenario I have seen her run over the entire story, embellishing here and there an incident that seemed to need more of the comic, or advising her laughing director how to strengthen the whole. Then whirling round to quip a passer-by or indulge in burlesque mimicry of a star whose back was turned.

At the risk of spoiling my word-pastel of her sprightly cleverness and flooding generosity, I am constrained to add that there is another side of Mabel Normand. She is really a pathetic girl if you consider with tender eyes. Like a worldly, knowing child, whose sophistication has grown with the years, but whose soul has lingered behind, and who can't, so to speak, make ends meet, or reconcile what she feels with what she knows.

Hence she is in state of bewilderment, perplexed with life and in doubt of how to meet its problems. Her merriment breaks out. She gives way to it in an effort once more to be a child. The something inside tells her she isn't. Obviously she astonishes her beholders, troubles herself, and gives foundation to stories of her dare-deviltry.

"You talk as if you had flat feet," she would say if I told her this. "I'm no poor butterfly, but a girl trying to make an honest living studying art." Mabel is like that, you know.

More of Mabel's mablescent mabelisms, including the incident of Mrs. Woodrow Wilson's supposed tale of troubles with the White House servants, must wait till next month.

* Letter from Mabel to a friend, "Rose," December 10, 1922

My Dear Rose:

So many thanks for your charming letter. It was a delightful surprise and made me very happy to know my Little friend Rose, whom I met while visiting one of the most fascinating places in all England, hadn't forgotten the Little American

I shall always remember my visit that day. You all made me so wonderfully happy and welcome. How sincere and splendid you all are! Many times I'm rather lonesome and wish I could have that glorious day all over again.

We have been working in New York. My secretary forwarded your letter from California to me here, but expect to return there for Christmas to start my new picture. Always write to my California address.

If Mr. Joel has an more elections, do help him. I owe my visit and the happiness I had that day to his kindness, asking me to the part of London he loves, and is interested in.

I wanted so, to come over for Christmas. However, will be over in the Spring. A very Merry Christmas and happy New Year to (as your letter reads) My Little London Pal Rose. And all the happiness in the world is my wish to you.

Am sending photos today.

Your friend always,

Mabel Normand

PS. Merry Christmas to Harry (the Baker) and all the other Bakers.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, December 22, 1922

New York -- E. M. Ascher, personal representative of Mack Sennett...confirmed that Miss Normand sailed on the White Star Line steamship *Majestic* last Saturday, December 16, to spend Christmas in England. He said she would sail December 27 or 28 for New York...Confirming Miss Normand's return to Europe, which she visited in the summer, Ascher said she sailed rather suddenly "with a party of friends," on the *Majestic* merely to spend Christmas in London. He said she had advised him she would sail on her return voyage two or three days after Christmas. He denied the disclosure of Wally Reid's breakdown had any connection with her sudden departure from the United States, but admitted she decided on the trip somewhat expectedly...

* from *Camera!*, December 30, 1922

Mabel Normand, who spent her Christmas holidays in London, is expected to return to Hollywood about the middle of January, when she will start her new picture at the Mack Sennett studios.

1923

* from *Picture-Play*, January 1923

Memories on My Own Screen

By Norbert Lusk

Part II

If you remember, last month I coined a word, "mablescent."²⁰¹ It may have explained itself by its nearness to the name of Mabel Normand. Then again it may weigh on your mind to learn that Noah Webster didn't share my fondness for her by creating an adjective in her honor. Anyhow, in my private dictionary it means "merry, madcappish, warm-hearted true." In short, like Mabel Normand.

It was the madcappishness in her, perhaps, that spun the yarn about that Mrs. Woodrow Wilson said when they met. She vowed, big eyed that she was not flirting with facts, but tattling the truth. This is the story. Incidental details may intensify the spotlight on the general impression of her.

When Mrs. Wilson was president it happened that a motion-picture matinee was arranged in Washington for the benefit of the charity in which Mrs. Wilson was interested. By means dark to me the picture chosen was Miss Normand's "Joan of Plattsburg." As an extra special super-deluxe attraction the star herself would appear with it.

I don't remember how many thousands of dollars it was said her absence from the picture then in the making would cost the company. One was led to believe it meant financial immolation for some one; it was atoned for, however, by motives of patriotism -- there were soldiers in "Joan of Plattsburg." Howsoever, Mabel didn't give a hang, how much it cost. To prove it, she refused to accommodate herself and maid in the room provided for the day at the best hotel. Parlor, bedroom and bath -- or nothing. With a toss and a stamp she elected herself prima donna. Washington was congested, space was at a premium, but the suite was hers. For all I know a senator strolled the

²⁰¹ The term "mablescent" was actually first used by Truman B. Handy in *Photo-Play World*, May 1920.

streets, homeless, that she might have it. Contrarily, she spent much time outside. Laughing with the telephone operators, to whom she gave candy, lavishly, afforded her the comfort lacking in her rooms.

The matinee was a success. Mabel was solemnly presented to Mrs. Wilson by the manager whose awe of the two great ladies lowered his voice to a whisper, and drawn through curtains into the royal box. Then she appeared on the stage and captivated all by being her lively self.

"What did Mrs. Wilson say to you?" she was asked.

"Oh, she's having trouble with the White House help," Mabel averred. "Just can't do a thing with them. It's the war I guess, and they want more money like everybody else. She says I'm her favorite star."

This seemed singularly informal, to say the least, but as Mabel sulked on learning that she was billed to appear in seven other theaters, the matter could not then be pursued. She declared that her good-natured willingness to come had been taken cruel advantage of. She had, she said with burning eyes, been deceived. Worse still, she blamed me, forgetful of that chocolate cake more precious than pearls. I was silent, crushed. To this day I am in doubt of what Mrs. Wilson really said.

That night when she had made her last bow and blown from her palm the last kiss, on boarding the train she embraced all whom she had previously snubbed. She confessed she'd been rude, hoped we didn't hate her -- she couldn't bear that! -- and explained that the strain of appearing in person always made her nervous. And she had to have that suite because Mae Marsh was always given one!

It never was my lot to escort Miss Marsh on similar expeditions and see for myself. But a friend of mine did. The city chosen for a glimpse of "the whim girl of the screen," as she was then pre-agented, was Buffalo. For all I know the star and her sister -- who had confided to me that studying astrology and eating green almonds were the joys of her life -- may have had a whole floor.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 1923

Mabel Normand Soon to Be Among Us Again

By Grace Kingsley

Mabel Normand, Mack Sennett star, is either in New York at this very moment or is on her way, according to advices received from the Sennett studio yesterday. She sailed from Southampton on the Majestic one day last week, returning from her second trip abroad.

It is expected that Miss Normand will not linger in New York, but that she will come home almost at once. Already another story from the prolific brain and typewriter of Mack Sennett awaits her. It is called "Mary Ann," and is about the adventures of a little Irish girl in the New York tenement district and also as a shop girl.

The star's home on West Seventh street is being prepared for her reception, and she will find a bundle of Christmas presents as high as the ceiling for her to open.

The Sennett studios are preparing for unusual activity. Phyllis Haver has just about finished her role in the Selznick picture, "The Common Law," in which she has been appearing, and a story is ready to go to work on as soon as she can move her makeup box back to the Sennett lot. Dick Jones will direct. He also will direct Miss Normand when he finishes the Haver picture.

* from *Camera!*, January 21, 1923

There seems to be a mystery regarding the whereabouts of Mabel Normand. Although she was scheduled to start enacting the starring role of the next Mack Sennett picture about three weeks ago, and that she was expected to be present at the premiere showing of her current screen success, "Suzanna," at the Mission Theatre, no word of explanation has been received regarding her delay in arriving in Los Angeles. Friends of the comedy star say she is in Berlin, Germany, and Mr. Sennett says she is making arrangements to leave for Los Angeles to start work on her next picture, "Mary Ann."

* from *San Francisco Examiner*, February 4, 1923

Screen Star Writing Book Of Travel

Mabel Normand is returning from New York to California, according to advices from Mack Sennett to his representatives now in San Francisco in connection with the Strand theater presentation of "Suzanna," his nine-reel California romance, and she is bringing a bulky manuscript.

The manuscript is a copy of her "European Impressions," which is to be printed for the trade by Bretano's of New York. The star who has been sojourning on the other side of the Atlantic since last June has compiled her impressions into book form, commenting on the foibles and idiosyncrasies of the erudite ladies and gentleman of the other side. Mabel's wit being somewhat caustic and penetrating. The manuscript holds rare promise of enjoyment.

The little star has visited England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, Switzerland, Turkey and Northern Africa. In England she visited the actual settings of Thomas Burke's "Limehouse Nights" in the poor quarters of London; Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral; the shopping district, etc.; and there are to be some free comments upon how royalty strikes her.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, February 9, 1923

" Louella Parsons

After spending the holidays in Europe Mabel Normand is on the high seas speeding toward New York. She sailed from England on the Baltic on February 3 and is due to reach here in a few days...

* from *San Francisco Examiner*, February 9, 1923

Screen Star Comes Out Of Seclusion

By Basil D. Woon

Paris. Feb. 8 -- (Special Wireless dispatch to Universal Service) Mabel Normand who shortly before Christmas renounced the gay life of Hollywood for a quiet life under another name somewhere in Europe, is aboard the liner Baltic, bound for New York.

Her friends declare, however, that she will not return in the pictures until the sad end of Wally Reid is forgotten by the public.²⁰²

Miss Normand's decision to abandon Hollywood was taken before the death of Wally Reid. Since then, according to intimate friends, she has lived in private London home, preserving strictest incognito.

In her new bode she forgot her flashing jewels. Her fingers formerly blazing with diamonds were ringless, her neck was bare of pearls and her marvelous collection of evening gowns remained locked in trunks which were never opened. Her daily existence was almost as Spartan as a nun's.

A month ago she came to Paris from London and took rooms at a small hotel with a single elderly woman as a companion. Her presence in the gay city would not have been known except that one day her longing to visit her former haunts became too great. With her companion she attended a tea dance at Claridge's sitting at a back table.

Wearing a simple gown, without say rouge, without even her famous separated eyebrows, and with a huge hat shielding her face, she hoped to escape recognition. But she was seen by her old acquaintance -- Daniel Stern, leader of the Claridge orchestra, whom she had known well in other days in Claridge. To Stern she said:

"I have quit. Even for me the pace got too fast. I am only a young girl and I feel like an old woman.

"When Walley [sic] Reid took sick, I suddenly realized the horrible futility of the sort of life we led. We made big money, but it only brought us headaches and heartaches, sapping our strength and powers of resistance. The breaking point must inevitably be reached."

* from *San Francisco Examiner*, February 14, 1923

Mabel Normand Says She's Wed Then Denies It

New York (Universal Services) -- "Ooh, but he's adorable. No, I won't tell, who he is, what or where he is. Ooh, but he's grand," and Mabel Normand vivacious screen comedienne hugged the two nearest reporters to whom she was announcing she was married. It happened when Miss Normand arrived today from England on the White Star liner Baltic.

Mabel didn't intend to tell a soul about it. It was when a newspaper man, noticed a diamond studded platinum wedding ring on her finger that the secret was out.

"Oh, I should have kept my glove on," cried the blushing Mabel, "and then I would not have let you fellows in on the secret."

When the reporters resumed their questioning she said:

"Ah, I was only kidding. Gosh, I'm so glad to be back home. I was only fooling. I'm not married honest."

And then she chirruped: "Come on, cheer up, fellows, I'm so happy over being married I just hate to see you looking like funerals."

Then followed affirmations and denials, the last being a sweeping denial that she was married. But fellow passengers said they were sure she had married a wealthy middle-aged American in London early in December. So that's that.

Miss Normand said the death of Wally Reid was a terrible shock to her.

"Its untrue that movie actors and actresses, because of the tension of their work needs drugs or should use large amounts of whiskey," she said. "If any do it's a shame."

"For one, I know that if I go to bed early and lead a clean life I can do my work much better than those who chose to dissipate. My mother brought me up to go to church regularly and every Sunday I go to six o'clock mass. Even on this boat I went, (it's) the second cabin."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, February 14, 1923

Mabel Normand Engaged? No Indeed

Mabel Normand, film star, returned from Europe yesterday wearing a gold ring studded with diamonds on the "engagement finger" of her left hand.

She denied, however, she had married in England or perhaps became engaged there. She did admit she had met agreeable persons during her stay in the British Isles since early in December; but, that apparently was as far as the matter went. There were rumors on the ship. But liners are such gossipy places!

Miss Normand herself looked agreeable as she came down the gangplank of the Baltic, which had met the Winter gales and had one of the roughest voyages this season.

The photo-play actress was apparently in fine health. Despite published reports from abroad that she was living a quiet life there, with no display of fine dresses or jewels, she arrived yesterday arrayed in a black dress of the kind called "chic," a stunning leather-trimmed hat and her celebrated rope of pearls around her neck. As to what she has been doing while abroad she was silent. Several friends met her at the pier.

She said she would go to Hollywood next Tuesday to appear in a film called "Marianne," under Mack Sennett's direction. She went to the Hotel Ambassador with a traveling companion who on the passenger list was "Miss E. Luth," but who, according to Miss Normand, was Mrs. Louise Lee.

Miss Normand looked at her old home on Staten Island when the Baltic lay at Quarantine, and declared:

"It looks good covered with snow."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, February 23, 1923

" Louella Parsons

²⁰² What made the death of Wallace Reid from drug addiction so particularly notable and tragic was not merely the involvement of drugs in his death, but that Reid in many ways represented the idea of American youth and manhood -- an aspect of his story that is commonly overlooked. It is alleged in Andy Edmond's *Frame-up: The Untold Story of Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle* that Reid first starting taking morphine at the instigation of Paramount studio chief, Adolph Zukor. In 1919, Reid suffered from an injury while filming on location. Refusing to allow production to stop because of the pain the injury was causing him, Zukor sent doctors to the filming site with orders to give him whatever it would take to keep him up and working. This reportedly included the morphine that subsequently brought about his demise.

After spending her time dodging inquisitive reporters who tried to fasten a husband on her Mabel Normand is returning to the Coast and work. She is leaving for Hollywood today. Her first picture will be "Mary Ann," to be made by Mack Sennett. Miss Normand yesterday went to the Capitol Theatre, where she had a preview of "Suzanne," [sic] her next picture. She looks very well these days and, having had a rest, is ready to return to work. She came home from Europe only a couple of weeks ago.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 28, 1923

Married? No! Think I'd Keep It Dark?

By Grace Kingsley

"Of course, I haven't any husband! Don't be foolish! Think I'd marry anybody that I would be keeping dark like this? No I'm still an unappropriated blessing!"

Thus Mabel Normand set at rest yesterday, on her arrival from Europe, the rumors that she had acquired a husband in Europe.

"See, I've brought home trunkful of clothes enough to frighten off any husband!"

Then she turned around to Jack Pickford and Ben Turpin and gave them a cordial "hello" and handshake.

"Did you see Mary?" Jack inquired eagerly.

"No I wasn't in Chicago long enough," said Mabel.

After which she and Ben Turpin posed for the photographers with Mabel about to plant a thistledown kiss on Ben's pure brow.

A score of friends were at the train to greet Mabel, and with characteristic, warm-heartedness, she offered a place in her big machine to all the careless ones among them, so that when she set off she looked rather like the lady of tradition who lived in a shoe -- that is she looked like the lady when the lady was very young and radiant.

For never has Mabel Normand looked so lovely. Her long rest and visiting of new scenes have apparently done her no end of good. She is plumper than she has ever been, and blooming as a rose. In fact, she is the Mabel of the early Sennett days, the care-free Mabel with the red cheeks and laughing brown eyes.

Miss Normand has been absent from Los Angeles and the West since last June when she left for Europe. She has made two trips abroad since then, having come back to this country a few months ago, staying in New York several weeks, and then going back to London. While abroad Miss Normand was royally entertained and said she had a gorgeous time.

"We thought maybe you wouldn't talk to us after meeting all those lords and ladies," we said.

"Say," said Mabel, "I like Americans!"

"You've brought an English complexion along with you," we volunteered.

Mabel smiled quizzically.

"Never mind that, but really I ought to. You should see me motoring around the country. I'm crazy about London -- but I love still more the quaint old English country places. Say, you've got to be an outdoor person over there."

Miss Normand announced when in the East that she meant to write the story of her European experiences, and she still sticks to that even if she is almost at once to start work on a new picture called "Mary Ann," in which she will depict a department store clerk.

"Don't you hate to go back to work after all that loafing?"

"No, I'll be tickled to death to get back into the harness," said Mabel. "Do you know, sometimes I think that work is more fun than fun is."

Then Mabel rolled off to her home on Seventh street, while a maid brought up the rear in a taxi surrounded by trunks full of "bonnet, and box and glove, and a thousand things that women love, but no man knows the name thereof."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, March 11, 1923

" Frances Agnew

Los Angeles, March 5--For eight months or more Mabel Normand has been missing from Hollywood and the film folk and "fans" here often wondered if Mabel were ever coming home. She set their wonders at rest by returning Tuesday night, bubbling over with even more than her usual "pep" following her long rest. And she lightened the hearts of confirmed native sons and daughters by saying that despite all the charms of the Continent she is still loyal to Hollywood. She says she will start work immediately in Mack Sennett's story, "Mary Ann."

* from *Movie Weekly*, March 17, 1923

Why Temptations Beset Paths Of Screen Stars

By Mabel Normand

As related to Gladys Hall

It took us longer to see Mabel Normand than it took Lord Carnovan to see Tutankahmen.

He may not have seen him yet, for all we know, but we must have our little figure of speech!

When we phoned Mabel on an average of nine hours out of ten, we were told that:

Mabel was visiting the old folks at home down in sunny Staten Island; Mabel was week-ending it up in Westchester; Mabel was seeing friends off for Bulgaria. Mabel stands out in our minds for many notable things, but perhaps the most notable will always be that she had friends who were going to Bulgaria! It's so picturesque. Like a George Barr McCutcheon novel. Just what you might expect from Mabel out of all the world.

When we did eventually climb in to see her over innovation trunks and gifts she had brought from London for all of her friends and all of her enemies (if she has nay), we said to her without preamble:

"Do temptations beset the paths of the screen stars?"

"Do naughty men make naughty, naughty love to them?"

"Do little extra girls stray from the straight-and-narrow that they may wear giddy gloriaswansin [sic] gowns?"

"Are there midnight parties with the wine god, Bacchus, as high host?"

"Is it necessary or even customary, for the Little Country Girl to reach stardom via the caresses of her -- say -- director?"

Now Mabel was about to leave for California any minute. She was considerably more concerned with time tables than she was with temptations, for which who can blame her? For if one misses a train one is definitely left behind. But if one misses a temptation there is always another one just around the corner.

Besides the papers have just been printing All Sorts of Annoying Things About Mabel, chief among which being the report that while in London she had contracted matrimony with a middle-aged millionaire. Which Mabel emphatically denied to us.

At any rate, we thought of all the screen scandals we could muster to mind and then we repeated, firmly: "Why do temptation beset the paths of the screen stars?"

"Because they're human, I suppose," said Mabel, absent-mindedly, talking on one telephone to Dr. Royal S. Copeland's secretary, on another wire to Another Notable and on other wires still to all the women in New York, we should deduce, all of whom were claiming to be her bosom friends and affirming that they would die or something if she didn't give them one teeny, tiny moment of her time before departing for the Coast and Mack Sennett and the making of "Mary Ann."

By the way, we have interviewed most of the Profession in our time, and to an extra, Mabel is voted the Most Popular Girl of them all. We have never heard a single member of her profession, and we don't mean the men, we mean the women, say one word against her, and we have heard every woman of them say a good many words for her. It is current knowledge in the cinema that Mabel is a regular human being, generous almost to a fault, always ready to help the fellow who is down, constantly doing those who have harmed her a good turn, loyal, forgiving, staunch and four-square. When women speak so of a woman there is truth in the offing!

But to get back to temptations:

"Of course there are temptations on the screen," said Mabel, "for the screen is a clearing house for woman's beauty and man's power, and whenever these twain meet gossip's tongue will wag. But there are temptations everywhere, and I will say that there are more temptations in an average summer hotel, where people have all the leisure in the world for mischief, then there are on a studio lot. Leisure is the handmaid of danger.

"A girl in a business office encounters temptation. A society girl meets it everywhere. If there be temptations in a studio it is not because it is a studio, but because there congregate there youth and beauty and adventure!

"Of course, the majority of this stuff about girls in the movies drinking and carousing is hokum.

"In the first place, drinking and dissipation and late hours play the very devil with a girl's looks. Anyone photographs best in the early morning. I know I do. The result is that one has to be on the job early in the morning, looking one's best. One has to have a face that won't give the cameraman the collywobbles. Don't forget that the cameraman is quite as ambitious in his way as the star is ambitious in his or hers. He doesn't want to 'shoot' and 'all-night' variety of face and be blamed for bad photographic work. Well, two and two make eight, nine, or something like that, and the answer is that if temptations beset the paths of the screen stars, the stars jolly well have to fight the temptations if they would remain securely upon the Milky Way.

"You can't combine the two. Look at poor Wally Reid...he didn't last long or look long, either after he had begun to dissipate in earnest.

"Girls on the screen have to sleep well and live well if they want to look well, and as to look well is three-quarters of the battle, the rest is easy!

"That's all I know about temptations...-- if you meet 'em, fight 'em!"

* from *Suzanna* publicity material, undated, Mack Sennett papers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

• From interview with Mabel

...In a brief time since her inception in picture work, Miss Normand has won an enviable place among the artists of the cinema, as a writer of screen plays and a musician of no mean ability.

Her ability to write seems to be a natural gift, for as she says herself, "I can't remember just when I began to fuss with stories, but as it has always been my fortune to have the scripts, with which I am to work, submitted to me before production started, I have had that opportunity others have missed, to make suggestions and alterations, until I got so that I could write an entire story and have it accepted. My new production, "Suzanna," incorporates many ideas of my own -- shall I say invention? I make a study of personalities too, and those in whom I became interested, I write their biographies. Writing has become a pet past time with me, during the periods between my studio work and the time I give to my music and French studies."

"Personally," says Miss Normand, "I prefer music to either of the arts and were I endowed with the power to alter a career, mine would be turned Beethoven-ward.

"To play before an audience whom you can see and feel are entering into the spirit of your endeavors, must be glorious. To see them enjoy it and carry away with them pleasant and favorable impressions, is something absolutely foreign to me and I have longed for that opportunity. Maybe, who knows but I will someday," -- but here she laughs in that elfish, almost impish way peculiar to only Mabel Normand, and left us flat -- to wonder.

* from *New York Times*, March 26, 1923

LOVE IN OLD CALIFORNIA: *Suzanna*

Mack Sennett's latest fling at being serious is a rather nice little love story of old California in the early eighties. Not once does Mr. Sennett veer actually into bludgeon like comedy. It is true that a bit too much speed is given to the horses, and a crack cowboy would find his hands full if he had to fight a sword duel with a stolen girl taking up space on his horse. But as we did not have to sit through the custard pie stages, the film was a relief and we were tolerably pleased with *Suzanna*.

The story is trite, but there is plenty of love and one very long kiss. The story is one of changed babies, the poor girl becoming the rich girl. *Suzanna*, for a number of years of her life, had to put up with scolding and hardships,

not knowing that she was the true daughter of Don Diego. Suzanna has been working for Don Fernando, and has fallen in love with Ramon Fernando unknown to the Don. One day she is told to get away to the reservation. Hence we have a pathetic picture of Mabel Normand trudging a cactus strewn path, feeling very miserable. Suddenly there is the soft sound of horse's hoofs on the sandy trail. Just in the nick of time, when she was so tired, Don Diego comes along with Dolores, the impostor daughter. He had seen the poor little thing at Don Fernando's, and tells her he will look after her, and she gets into the luxurious carriage. Don Diego is anxious to have his supposed daughter, Dolores marry Ramon Fernando. Dolores does not care so much, as she is very much struck with a handsome, daring flirtatious toreador, who has a kiss for any pair of curved red lips. In fact, the toreador does not dislike Suzanna.

Eventually, through an aged servant, Suzanna discovers she is the daughter of Don Diego, but she decides that she will say nothing until Dolores is married to Ramon, as it is a cherished wish of Don Diego. To make sure she will not interfere with the wedding, she resolves on the same day to wed the toreador. It would have happened but for the far-sighted Ramon, who, when about to take Dolores as his wife, suddenly dashes from the altar, and grabbing a horse, races by the open air spot where Suzanna was to be married and snatches her up on his saddle. Don Diego is told, and he is not nearly as shocked as everybody thought he would be. Dolores weds her toreador and Suzanna is in the arms of Ramon when the picture finishes. All the actors do fairly well, and the costumes and sets are adequate. The bullfight scenes are quite effective.

Hal Roach's comedy "The Big Show" is full of fun, a half hour's delight for young and old.

* from *Variety*, March 29, 1923

SUZANNA

Mack Sennett production starring Mabel Normand, with the producer the author. Releasing through the Allied Producers and Distributors' Corp., directed by F. Richard Jones, with Ray Gray assisting. Time 60 minutes. At the Capitol; New York, week March 25.

A likely feature to signalize the more or less return of Mabel Normand to the screen. The film will never cause a stampede, although it is a light comedy vehicle, capably handled as to its technicalities and revealing Miss Normand in a distinct "cute" classification. It amused and satisfied a capacity Sunday afternoon gathering at the Capitol.

The picture is entirely in costume, with the locale and period set in an old Spanish colony of California. The illusion has been nicely carried out by settings, with a few of the exteriors gaining particular attention because of their appeal to the eye. To wit, the cameraman has turned in a notable piece of work throughout the entire footage. An appropriate cast has been chosen that screens as a worthy combination in support of the star.

Of Miss Normand it may be said that she is a much more refined damsel during this episode than she oft has been in her previous pictures. And not eliminating all the tomboy mannerisms, either. But the general trend in the direction seems to have been under the motto "tone down," and such procedure sums up as far from detrimental. Miss Normand's personal performance is a worthy feature of this release, as is the placing of the title of the picture over the star's name whence introducing her in the role by means of a caption.

This story is lightly weaved around Suzanna, a peon girl, beloved by and in love with Ramon, the son of the ranch owner. Their marriage is considered impossible because of their different stations in life and the boy becomes forcibly betrothed to Dolores, the daughter of Don Diego. Ramon is resigned to his fate until from the church where his ceremony is to take place he sees Suzanna marching to another altar with Pancho, the matador. Whence follows a flying pick-up from a horse and the ensuing horse chase.

Meanwhile there is the revelation made that Suzanna, and not Dolores, is the true daughter of Don Diego, which permits of the happy ending.

As a comedy minus any potential strength this Sennett production will undoubtedly please. It's simply a matter of a few chuckles, every so often, picturesquely presented. If nothing else, it brings Mabel Normand before the filmgoers once more in a release that will be beneficial for anything that is scheduled to follow with her. (Skig.)

* from *Suzanna* publicity material, Sennett papers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

People present at Suzanna premiere -- Mission Theatre, Los Angeles:

Clara Kimball Young, Mrs. Joseph Saxe, Harry Garson, Bessie Love, William Gibbs McAdoo, Mae Murray, Robert Z. Leonard, Reginald Barker, Claire Windsor, Louis B. Mayer, Phyllis Haver with her mother, Peggy Elinor, accompanied by Lew Cody, Larry Semon, Priscilla Dean, Rosemary Theby, Samuel Goldwyn, Norma Talmadge, Joseph Schenck, Helen Lynch, Sol Lesser, Anna Q. Nilsson, Earle Fox, Norman Kerry, Helen Ferguson, Conrad Nagel, June Mathis [screen writer], Jack, Harry and Sam Warner

* from *Chicago Daily News*, April 11, 1923

" Carl Sandburg

Suzanna, the Mack Sennett production in which Mabel Normand is the leading player, is having its first run at Barbee's Loop Theater this week.

The picture tells a story of a girl, Suzanna, who is sort of a roustabout in the hacienda of Don Fernando. And though Ramon, the handsome son of Don Fernando has chosen Suzanna as the fairest of the fair the stern father has decreed that he marry Dolores, the daughter of Don Diego. And Suzanna is ordered to leave and take up her abode in the Indian mission. Thither she is wending her way when she meets the carriage on the way to the wedding of his daughter, Dolores, to Ramon. Don Diego asks her to ride with him to the wedding of his daughter. At the fiesta Suzanna dances with wild grace and when the men throw their sombreros about her dancing feet she kicks each one out of the ring until Ramon's hat enters. Him she chooses. All of this naturally makes it harder for Ramon to think calmly about his father's decree that he must marry Dolores. Everything is ready for the wedding, the ceremony is about to be performed, when Ramon dashes away, lifts Suzanna on to a horse and they ride for the cactus and sage desert. In the hour they are captured and Ramon's father, Don Fernando is about to wreak vengeance on his son it is revealed that Suzanna is the rightful daughter of the rich Don Diego and thus fully competent to assume the place of the wife of Ramon.

There is more of the wistful and less of the comic element than in previous Mabel Normand pictures. *Suzanna* classes among the first-rate pictures now worth seeing.

* from *Camera!*, April 21, 1923

Miss Normand to Play "Extra Girl"

Mabel Normand, inimitable comedienne of the cinema, is one of the busiest stars of the day. And she has plenty of work to look forward to, for while she is at present being photographed in the title role of "The Extra Girl," plans are already being formulated to launch into a big production of "Mary Anne," immediately upon the completion of the present vehicle. Both stories are from the pen of Mack Sennett and ideally suited to Miss Normand's individuality.

In her present vehicle, "The Extra Girl," Miss Normand will enjoy ample opportunity to further demonstrate her wistful charm, with one of the best all-star casts ever assembled, including such artists as Ralph Graves in the male lead, George Nichols, Dot Farley, Anna Hernandez and Vernon Dent.

F. Richard Jones, supervising director of Mack Sennett productions selected William A. Seiter to direct this latest classic. Homer Scott, well known as one of the best photographers in the profession, and an expert on lighting effects, is in charge of the cameras, cranking first camera himself, as he did with previous Mack Sennett productions starring Mabel Normand.

Work is continuing on the filming of the interior scenes in the home of "The Extra Girl," a setting of which has been declared a marvel of realism, and which took four weeks until completely constructed in every detail. Phyllis Haver had started in this picture, but according to a report, a disagreement brought about the substitution of Miss Normand.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, April 22, 1923

Mabel Normand Chosen: Will Take Phyllis Haver's Part in "The Extra Girl"

Hollywood, April 21--Announcement was made today that Mabel Normand is to play the title role in "The Extra Girl," which Mack Sennett is now producing. This settles a much discussed question, as Phyllis Haver, who was promoted to stardom by Sennett for this production, resigned her association with the producer last week. Rumor has it that there was a disagreement over the story. Then it was said that Winifred Bryson would play the role, but there was apparently some hitch in that play, too, for today comes the news of Miss Normand's acceptance of the part. She will play "The Extra Girl" immediately and later star in "Mary Ann."

* from *Extra Girl* production files, Mack Sennett papers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

Extra Girl

filmed Apr. 23 -- July 14, 22?, 23?

continuity scenarios handed out 11/22 and 12/22

Scenes omitted from final film: Yacht scene, costumes, row boat, barn scene -- Dave and Sue chased by bull

Introductory title (Mr. Sennett suggests that perhaps a prologue about the Extra Girl might be appropriate here.)

Possible Opening titles

In the great little village of River Bend, far removed from the hustle and bustle of the noisy city, the peaceful contentment of the community is broken by a girl's rebellion at the restraint placed on her affections, and her desire to seek a future on the screen.

That love, the sweetest thing known to mankind, is the one element impossible to control, that it is infinitely deeper, larger and higher than any other known element, has been proven time and again.

Why not then, allow these emotions within ourselves and others, to develop and mature?

The story to be unfolded is, but another instance of parental objection to the uniting of two hearts, which have grown as one, since early childhood. The reason being, as is frequently the case, the influential interruption of the almighty dollar.

The stage has been a lure to aspiring youth for decades. Of recent years this has been more true of the screen, owing to the fact that the industry which it represents is large enough to accommodate such large numbers.

Of the millions of aspirants --- few are chosen. The folly of girls and boys in deserting comfortable homes, turning their backs on parents, friends and assured futures, to gamble their lives for an uncertain future and the entanglement which confront and often enmesh them, is vividly portrayed (in) the story to be unfolded.

Title Card notes

Mr. Sennett still contends that daddy should have a title where he threatens Mabel with his leather belt. "You get your duds on and get them on quick." Might possibly fit.

See if false position of Mabel's hand in her scene with Hackett cannot be corrected. This comes near title "That's true, but we all make mistakes."

From note fragment:

Millie of the Movies written by Mack Sennett, originally for Phyllis Haver, basis of Extra Girl, to be directed by William Seiter, scenario by Bernard McConville

* from *Extra Girl* production files, Mack Sennett papers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

• Contract between Paramount and Sennett

main points briefly:

Pathe licensed to exhibit Extra Girl for six weeks starting 24 Sept. 1923 and to run indefinitely

Agreement 14 June 1923

Producer agrees to produce and deliver to Associated Exhibitors two feature photoplays starring Mabel Normand of not less than five no more than ten reels

First is "Extra Girl", Second is "Mary Ann"

First feature delivered Aug. 1st 1923, the second to be delivered Jan. 1, 1924

Receipts for scenario of Mary Ann

F. Richard Jones, Jan. 26, 1923

Eddie Gribbon, Oct. 25, 1922

Walter J. Klinger, Oct. 13, 1927

* from *Extra Girl* publicity material, Mack Sennett papers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

Mabel: "It is just the kind of part I like to play. I will remember the days when I tried and tried to get an audience with a producer, after which I tried just as hard to make good. I know the heartaches and the set backs the poor extra girls have to contend with and I always feel sorry for them."

It is typical of Mabel Normand to become friendly with any children or extra girls on her set, and between scenes she will often take one of the girls to the side lines to tell her how she might improve her make up, dress her hair, or otherwise lend more attractiveness to her appearance, and many are the girls who have benefited from such advice.

Though technically an artist, Mabel Normand is just a plain, real girl, either on or off the set. As a matter of fact, there is absolutely no difference in her personality where or when you meet her, either at home, on a party or in the studio. There is no such thing as Mr. or Miss with her; first names are in order from the time you meet her until the time you take your leave, and one is always made to feel at home in her company.

Two of the most wonderful traits to be found in any human are features of Miss Normand's make-up. They are her great affection for children and animals. During the making of her present vehicle "The Extra Girl," the little star, who is an ardent golf enthusiast, would take time at the luncheon period to practice her golf shots. At these times the studio neighborhood children would fight for the privilege of chasing any ball she hit, and regardless of the number driven, each returned ball entitled the founder to a dime.

The day preceding the Fourth of July, Miss Normand staged a town party for these kiddies and with two of her pedigree canine pals, a beautiful chow and an imported German police dog, romped over the hills on the studio property until they were all tired; after which she treated them to a display of fireworks.

Unlike many others in her position in the profession, Mabel Normand dislikes publicity very much. This feature, which is considered strange for an actress, eliminates the possibility of showing to the great public at large the other side of her life, although her great affection and kind treatment of people and dumb animals dependent on others for happiness and success has endeared her to countless numbers of admirers.

The Extra Girl begins an extended run at the Mission Theatre in Los Angeles, in early September, after which it will be distributed nationally.

After The Extra Girl, Mr. Sennett and Mr. Jones are in preparation for her next starring vehicle, "Mary Anne," which, it is expected, will be put into production around Sept. 1st -- locale San Francisco

Mabel: "The Extra Girl represents the greatest photoplay effort of my life. It is the most deliciously human story I have ever played in, and the character appeals to me more than any I have ever done."

Every time the audience gave evidence of mirth, a check was made and when the picture was returned to the studio cutting room, those scenes which had provoked laughter were measured and found to total just a fraction over five thousand feet, out of the sixty-seven hundred which is the full length of the picture.

* from *Movie Weekly*, April 28, 1923

More Romantic Speculation

And, still speaking of romance, everyone is wondering whether Mabel Normand is married or not, or if she is just having the time of her life kidding people. For she told a large dinner party of friends not long ago that she was married to an English nobleman, that she meant to make just one more picture and then go to England to accept a big offer which she has there. She does not intend, she says, to give up her career.

Mabel wore a white satin dress at the dinner party, which she said was her wedding dress. She declared also that a ring she wore was her wedding ring.

Is she, or isn't she, spoofing?

* from *Photoplay*, June 1923

" Herbert Howe

It was while chatelaine of the Beaux Arts that Texas [Guinan] first drew the eastern filmers together, achieving a big financial and social success. She gave a farewell party for Pearl White before the star sailed for France to seek seclusion in a convent. Mabel Normand, George Beban, Anita Stewart, George Melford, Rubye de Remer, Nita Naldi, Allan Dwan, the Dolly sisters, Kitty Gordon, Bebe Daniels and all Pearl's friends were there, including the parish priest who counseled Miss White to seek serenity of mind and spirit within convent walls.

* from *Camera!*, June 23, 1923

Mabel Normand Has Her Own Golf Course Now

That she may keep in practice and brush up on some of the more intricate points of the great outdoor game of the Scots, golf, Mabel Normand has had constructed a miniature golf course back of her bungalow on the Mack Sennett studio lot, where one will find her every minute she is not busy on the set of "The Extra Girl."

Miss Normand has been an ardent golf enthusiast for many years and was one of the first women in Los Angeles to take out a golf membership in any of the clubs. The Annandale and Wilshire Country Clubs get Miss Normand's patronage, where it is admitted she is one of the best and steadiest players among the women.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, July 1923

Suzanna

It's hard to determine just what Mack Sennett was up to when he put over this ancient bit of hokum. The Sennett responsible for making light of timeworn material has fallen into the trap and becomes an imitator of uninspired directors. He wrote the story -- a story of a lowly peon girl who in reality is the daughter of a Spanish don, but who was exchanged in the cradle at birth for another. Ah there Mack! That's old stuff isn't it? The atmosphere is pretty good and there is some Spanish paprika visible here and there. But for the most part, it follows its familiar groove without any of Sennett's characteristic kidding. Mabel Normand is the peon and not a very colorful senorita either.

* from *Capt. Billy's Whiz Bang*, July 1923

Mabel Normand must have renewed her hold on Mack Sennett. When Mabel recently returned from Europe she managed to kick up such a didoe that the Phyllis Haver-Mack Sennett love affair was broken off. Phyllis disappeared from the lot, and Mabel was given the lead in "The Extra Girl" in spite of the fact that Phyllis already had done two weeks' work in the picture.

Bernard Shaw and Hall Caine, who were so keen for an introduction to Mabel in London, might find a plot in this.

* from *Camera!*, July 7, 1923

There appears to be a well grounded suspicion in the minds of those identified with the production of Mack Sennett's next feature offering to the classics of the screen, that in "The Extra Girl," Mabel Normand's new starring vehicle, a new Miss Normand will be seen.

Heretofore Miss Normand has adhered pretty closely to the portrayals of light dramatic and comedy roles. She is known the world over as a comedienne and will probably stay in that classification for all time to come. Despite this, however, the irresistible personality of this little screen favorite will force itself still deeper in the affections of her admirers, when "The Extra Girl" is given to the screen, owing to the fact that she is demonstrating in this new picture her right to be classed among the foremost emotional actresses of the cinema.

In one of the longest scenes shot of "The Extra Girl," Miss Normand shows a dual character which even her most enthusiastic admirers would doubt she was capable of expressing. For several minutes the Normand we all know so well, lively, gay and mischievous, is before us, but almost at the snapping of a finger her buoyancy gives way to an expression of utter despair, when she hears the words that tell of the financial ruin of her parents, and to which she has been an unsuspecting accomplice.

F. Richard Jones, directing "The Extra Girl," claims for Mack Sennett's little star that "regardless of what the producer, the star, or he himself will essay to do in the future, this present production and Mabel Normand's work in it will remain always as a monument to her inimitable versatility."

* from *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 1923

Miss Normand Hurt At Beach

That Mabel Normand, well-known screen actress had been injured in an accident at Coronado Sunday was learned yesterday when it was discovered that she is in the Good Samaritan Hospital here with a broken collar bone and other injuries. Miss Normand lay unconscious on the sands of Coronado Beach for some time after the accident and recovered consciousness only when she was revived in the Coronado Emergency Hospital.

Miss Normand was brought to this city Wednesday night in a special car, under the care of Drs. Cochran and Fulton of Los Angeles, whom she sent for.

She was riding on the beach, several miles from the Coronado Hospital, when her horse stumbled and pitched her over his head. The actress landed on her shoulder and the horse fell on top of her. That was the last thing she remembered she said.

How long she lay there Miss Normand does not know. Her horse wandered off along the beach and was caught by accidental passersby, who then retraced its hoof prints and found Miss Normand. She was identified at the Emergency Hospital by her name engraved in her watch.

Besides the broken collar bone, said to be a simple fracture, Miss Normand suffered minor injuries to her face, which, it was said, will not mar her appearance or leave permanent scars.²⁰³

Many friends called at Miss Normand's room yesterday and the flowers sent her overflowed into the hall. She was in good spirits and saw as many people as her physicians would permit. She was brought to this city, it was said, because the facilities for taking X-rays are better here.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, August 16, 1923

...Certain statements recently made by Miss Minter concerning events which occurred closely following the discovery of Taylor's body are regarded as possessing especial significance by the police.

²⁰³ It was during her stay at the Coronado Hospital that Mabel met Norman Church; whose divorce case she was later named in.

Mabel Normand, another film actress whose name was linked with that of Taylor at the time of his death, yesterday refused to discuss the affair in any way.

Miss Normand, who is confined to a hospital as a result of injuries received last week, could not be seen, but through her secretary gave out the following statement:

"I have not seen Mary Miles Minter for nearly a year and a half. I can see no reason why she should want to drag my name into this affair. I told all that I knew concerning Mr. Taylor at the time of his death and only wish to be let alone. It is too bad that my name should be dragged into this on account of the family squabbles between Miss Minter and her mother."

Miss Minter is quoted as making the admission that shortly after she learned of the death of Taylor she rushed over to the home of Miss Normand and demanded to know what she knew of the murder.

"I grasped her by the shoulders, shook her and looked straight into her eyes while she was still dressing and said:

"Mabel, what do you know about this?"

* from *Photoplay*, September 1923

Paul Bern gave a birthday party for Mae Busch, in the private banquet room at the Montmartre. Mabel Normand was there, Julianne Johnston, Corrine Griffith, Walter Morosco, Billy Haines, Carey Wilson and Joe Jackson.

* from *Camera!*, September 8, 1923

With Mabel Normand, F. Richard Jones has begun preparations for the production of the little star's next vehicle, to be known as "Mary Ann." This too, like her previous successes, will be photographed from an original story by Mack Sennett.

While Miss Normand is giving her attention to the wardrobe and other details which will be of particular interest to her, Mack Sennett and Dick Jones are selecting character types for portrayal of the principal roles.

Dick Jones is making arrangements for a trip to San Francisco in quest for location sites.

After reading the story of "Mary Anne" and her part in it, Miss Normand was most enthusiastic, claiming that the role she will be called upon to portray is greatly to her liking and exactly the character she has long wanted to do. If his schedule is not interrupted in any way, Mack Sennett will start production on "Mary Anne" the latter part of September or immediately following the premiere of "The Extra Girl," Miss Normand's recently completed vehicle, which is coming to the Mission Theatre.

* from *Picture Play Magazine*, October 1923

THE IRREPRESSIBLE ONE

**Fans are always clamoring to see more of Mabel Normand,
And in that they are quite like her many acquaintances.**

By Norbert Lusk

Miss Normand, one hand grasping a tube of tooth paste, the other holding a bibliophile's tenderness a volume of Ernest Dowson, romped into the room.

For two hours I had waited. My patience was that of a senescent courtier used to the etiquette of dying monarchies.

Not to interview her. Not as a stranger come to beg a photograph, or a year's tuition in a college of chiropractic, or even to beseech aid for a crippled kiddie's operation.

These benefices would, my experience told me, have been all too easily won from Mabel. The prospect of such picayune gold digging would have found me not at all trepidant.

I had come on a far, far more delicate mission – one that held me rigidly apprehensive in the plush and prisms of the hotel drawing-room, though not too unstrung to inventory the jumble of Mabel's belongings scattered, piled and flung here and there.

How like her they all were, I mused, but not too indulgently. Deciding, you understand, to be reserved and not let her know I'd attention to her gewgaws. They ranged from seven grotesque dolls, limply perched on mantel and chairs, to a capsized basket of faded flowers, and a leaning tower of cigarettes in boxes, with other oddments between.

For I was there as a once-devoted friend willing, but not too eager, to consummate a reconciliation, if I may use a toplofty phrase, and resolved to be dignified at all costs and not let old-time fondness be welded anew into fettered slavery.

It was to cancel an estrangement brought about by an unanswered letter, or, something equally heartbreaking that Mabel had done.

Frankly, I don't quite remember what it was, now, though before Miss Normand scampered down the hall my grievances were precisely defined, like the perforations on a music roll, and ready to be ground out, a complete opus, at concert pitch.

Mabel is like that – she makes her wounded victim forget his wrongs in a moment and buckle on the armor of a crusader to avenge her own. She is dreadfully devastating to dignity, to judicial balance, to one's *amour proper*.

That neglected letter, or whatever it was had made me sorry for myself and skeptical of the friendly vows of all queens of the screen. I had, indeed renounced the false sisterhood and consigned them to celluloid. When, as recorded, Mabel bounced in.

Now for the Normand witchery, sorcery or what not. If this story is to get anywhere at all, something that passes for explanation must be submitted. The hard part of it lies in translating it by means of the printed word, lacking, in turn, the wizardry, alchemy or what not of a Rossetti, a Thomas Hardy or a James Joyce. Mabel is deserving, honestly, of an abler etcher than I.

"I love your coat – it looks like an Airedale!" she cried outside, before I saw her, as a means of breaking the ice after three years.

"Ernest Dowson is my favorite poet. I love him. If he weren't dead I'd make him marry me." Mabel whirled in delivering herself of this and introduced me to the bell boy, who stood behind her, laden with books.

"This is my darling old friend who knows all my faults but loves me just the same. He's going to be Ritz about this when you go, because he's got himself up in soup and fish, trying to pass for an ambassador! But I don't care, now that he's forgiven me – do I Bunker Bean!"

Whereupon she resorted to her own way of stifling a reply. It is the way of an impulsive, affectionate child and, I add, to give the world hope, is not reserved for me alone. One's resistance sags under these onslaughts and I couldn't command myself to strike an attitude of chill dignity.

Picture, if you can, Mabel as she is off the screen and you'll not ask why. A little figure all vivid expression, quick movement and rapid speech, with enormous eyes and petulant, childlike mouth. She is wise as a serpent in the ways of the world, yet at times more naïve than a fictional milkmaid. Beneath it all her manipulation of people is unailing.

Clinging to the last vestige of self-assertiveness, I reminded her that I'd waited two hours.

"You *would*!" So would the Rock of Gibraltar! That's why you're wonderful. But I telephoned you twice from the bookshop. Don't tell me that maid didn't – I'm going to fire her!" She darted to the door, then wheeled and paused. "No; if you don't mind, I won't. She's a wonderful packer." Mabel softly closed the door and lowered her voice as if in a den of thieves.

"I'm going abroad – no one must know but you. I've always told you my secrets, haven't I? Sit here near me and I'll tell you some more." Followed chattering exposition of her plans.

They included, so far as I could adduce, nothing sub rosa. She was going to London for Christmas, would spend the holidays in Rome (I'd not surprised if she collected a present from the Vatican Christmas tree, if there were one) and return in a few weeks. There were some trifles to be looked after in her absence.

It was happiness, as always, to undertake them. Mabel asks little and makes one feel a minister plenipotentiary in obtaining chewing gum for her.

Our *rapprochement* complete, she saw no reason for settling down to stilted conversation about the weather and topics of the day. Accordingly she ran in and out of the room, presumably to confer with those wonderful packers, or leaped to answer the telephone's insistent jangle. It was always an invitation to join a party, and I caught names as celebrated as her own in these potential hosts. But Mabel refused all, declaring, in a torrent of endearments, that her physician had ordered quiet and rest.

"Isn't it outrageous?" She wailed, wide-eyed from her desk, "I have to autograph five hundred of these 'Suzanna' books before I can get away. It's slavery; yet people think we don't do anything more strenuous than change our shoe trees. I've got writer's cramp, as it is, and housemaid knee too. Tell me what to what on the flyleaf for my French teacher. I've been studying three years and don't know a thing, but he's a darling old peach."

She munched her pen. Already she was inked to the wrists. Needless to relate the ready star needed no prompting.

"Don't you *dare* like this book more than you do me!" she scribbled, "*Votre gamine terrible – Mabel.*"

Gamine! That's the word. Mabel herself described a phase of herself, her present phase.

Luxurious, lavish, independent of any individual's favor, she is a *gamine de luxe* – a sort of Kiki, minus Lenore Ulric, because, despite dissimilar circumstances, Mabel's heart is that of the child-woman if André Picard's play. Gaining her own ends by the sheer vigor of her attack, never accepting defeat, appraising people and situations to a nicety, and over all flooding an excess of capricious high spirits.

Mabel is inimitable undeniable, irresistible. You may put this down. If you choose, as arrant bias on the part of her toiling historian. But confront him, if you can, with the person who has withstood Mabel. Vainly he has sought this Hippolytus among studio workers – people generally without illusion – and while there are feminine stars of the dramatic persuasion who wouldn't exactly expand while Mabel watched their emotional scenes of burlesque would conflict with their lack of it.

Yet, while she indulges her *gamine* mood, there still are other moods. When finally she permitted the packing to be carried on without interference and had inscribed fly leaves galore, autographed pictures, written notes, dispatched telegrams, denied herself to callers, plied me with food, "Suzanna" souvenirs and instructions – and had driven home her points with some comic imitations of people we all know – she talked uninterruptedly. Probably as a means of warding off fatigue.

"Why is it, do you suppose, I'm not happy? People think I am. I babble because they expect just that. But, cross my heart and hope to die, I'm not Pollyanna by a long shot. There's something missing. Sometimes I think it's because I know people too well – see through them too easily – and it makes me want to hide myself away from it all. *You* know I really love to be alone where I can think things over but – you answer the telephone, darling – say that Miss Normand has gone over to Staten Island to see her mother." Fortunately this fib swept the current of Mabel's introspection into happier channels – happier, without doubt, for her visitor, who had the sudden qualms of one who might be keeping Mabel from thinking things over.

"You remember I always used to be writing things in my book? If you promise not to make fun of me, or take down anything, I'll read to you. I'm really self-conscious about my poems. I couldn't bear to have people laugh at a comedienne's attempt to be serious."

And so twisted into gnomelike angles, on the sofa, Mabel unlocked her book and read.

She won't mind mention of this because, in keeping my word not to quote. I have only recounted a fact which her fans should know.

Her verses are simple, unaffected, concrete. Each mirrors an impression. There are clear images, unclouded by wasted words, in them all. The sincerity of her intention disarms the critic (if I may masquerade as one so late in the story), and stirs and touches. Which is precisely what Mabel wished to do when she essayed her first author's reading under a rose lampshade.

"Why in the world don't you publish these? You'd have no trouble arranging it, and think what a surprise people would get."

"Not for any money – at least not now. They'd only be brought out of curiosity and some one surely would laugh. I couldn't bear to be laughed at in *that* way. When one understands life, or tries to, thoughts that touch very deeply should be kept mostly to one's self.

...Oh, but I'd love to do an autobiography and tell the truth. Mind you, the whole truth! That's all that would excuse it."

I predict that she will, some day, for unless all symptoms fail, what Mabel aches for is literary expression.

Certainly few busy people read more than she does or respond more readily when there is opportunity to discuss books. Of the fifty or so volumes awaiting the clutches of the packers, there was nothing obvious; no garishly jacketed best seller, but poetry, biography, criticism, history, all out of the ordinary.

In reading, however, as in her conduct, it would seem milady has her moods. She avowed affection for Ethel M. Dell – at least for one of her stories which Mabel expects to do in pictures – yet holds Leonard Merrick, economist of emotion and narration, in esteem.

"No, no; not that. Don't begin with 'Conrad in Quest of His Youth' – that's not a fair test of Merrick's power," she advised a caller who wished to become acquainted with the novelist. "Start with 'The Man Who Understood Women.'" The rest will take care of themselves."

She dispensed this counsel with a quiet zest that gave me a flash of the pedagogue, of you'll credit that. In line with this she assured me she was a born old maid, and expected to die one, because she spends much time happily cataloguing and rearranging her belongings. Servants notwithstanding, Mabel says she knows exactly where to find the black-lace stockings that have been mended once and betide the slave that mixes her handkerchiefs.

How, I asked myself, did the inflexible Britons receive this quaint, unconventional ex-Biograph girl? She had returned, not long since, from her first invasion of London and was now to go again, without having revisited Los Angeles. There must have been few lorgnons²⁰⁴ raised by the duchesses for Mabel to cartwheel into the midst of their unwedded young sons once more. So I asked her.

"In England people do the loveliest things for you for the love of doing them. You know what I mean? They don't calculate their kindness. It's an instinct, not a gesture, and it's gracefully casual. Gosh! I adore the English for their civilization, their traditions."

This enthusiastic blanketing she followed with details spotlighting the hospitality of lords and ladies in country homes and at hunt breakfasts. Of solitary walks over moors, gathering heather – and, with no less happiness, of a police inspector who had won her heart by escorting her through Limehouse.

"You knew dear George Loane Tucker, didn't you? Well Sir Hall Caine wrote me a darling note – no; sweet was the word for it (I mean quaint), telling me that Mr. Tucker, when he was alive, used to write him nice things about me. He came and turned out to be the gentlest, darlinest pet there ever was. We understood each other – zip! Like that! – and later I went to his house for tea.

"I liked Barrie too. Wasn't it a shame? I mean I was bathing when he called at the Ritz and kept him waiting too long" (oh Mabel, how like you!) "for when I came out he had gone, leaving a funny little note. It said that he had fixed the fire in the grate and hoped it would warm me. Of course I tried to make up for this later... Shaw was awfully kind too – very quizzical and clever."

She had, however, no tale of him to equal the other conquests, which gave me an opening to ask if it were true she had broken an engagement to meet Princess Mary.

"Oh course not! My friends ought to know me well enough to be sure I wouldn't do that. It was to have been at a charity bazaar or something. At the last moment the thing was called off. Some bigwig engineering it was sick. Then some one thought it would be funny to say Mabel Normand had been rude. That's how things start. Just because I'm a little – well, you know, *different* – people believe anything weird about me.

"I wish to heaven some philanthropist would take the time to write about me as I am. Something quite simple, natural. Not making me out a highbrow, or a stately Vere de Vere, or as a girl with no taste at all. Just as I really am – just *me*. Then the public wouldn't swallow nonsense when it's printed by those who don't care because they don't know any better ... It must be great to be a wharf rat."

Mabel next returned from Europe in high spirits on a slow steamer, under the impress that she had booked passage on an express.

Reporters, boarding the vessel at quarantine, still surrounded her at pier because, I surmised, she was offering entertainment – or news.

Next morning's paper rumored her supposed marriage to an anonymous Londoner. Mabel was in tearful indignation over this wrong and, as always spurred her sympathizers to avenge the canard. But first I probed for clues.

"I never said a thing," she averred. "A lady on the steamer was reading my palms, saw this diamond guard and kidded me about having married secretly. I kidded her back. Who wouldn't have? Then it spread. Things always spread. I'm going to take the veil."

She was reminded of what she previously complained of in newspaper misrepresentation and advised that she should have flatly contradicted the sociable palmist.

"Oh, you want me to be dignified. Dignity my eye! I can't be upstage and I can't be mean when people are nice. But I'll never even be civil to a newspaper man again."

On the morrow this sprightly queen of contradiction was hostess to a group of news gatherers, purposely to convince them of the errors of their ways. How she did it you perhaps know by now. At any rate the next edition of their journals gave space to Mabel's denial.

²⁰⁴ Spectacle lens, mounted on a handle, for occasional use.

This, then is the Mabel Normand adjudged the leading feminine comedian of the films. These glimpses of her away from the studios, chosen because they are typical rather than exceptional, reflect, I hope, the vigor and verve and whimsicality of her acting. It is doubtful, however, if they give an idea of her professional authority, sagacity. When she is absorbed in work it is absorption indeed. Her long experience – her facile inventiveness – fundamental sense of the comic – are all whipped into dynamic activity when she attacks a picture. Should the result disappoint, Mabel's reaction is that of utter heartbreak. But she rebounds. Like all urgent souls she never accepts defeat.

"She seems to be working out as one of those very human characters," she wrote of 'The Extra Girl.' "You know what I mean – a girl one looks at and wants to know more about as she passes by, and leaves one with a little ache that one may know her better.... She has given me tremendous ambition. If others have failed perhaps it was misjudgment of one kind or another in attempting them. But this picture has had the same effect as the faith of those who really love me. And so, from the way things look, I think those who care for me will be rather proud of their – Mabel."

* from *Los Angeles Times*, October 14, 1923

Designing Woman in Dress Matters

"Where does she get those trick hats and cute little suits and dresses she wears in her pictures?"

This question has been asked many times of Mabel Normand following her productions. Recently at a showing of her latest starring vehicle under the Mack Sennett banner, someone said, "I have never seen such a funny hat as Mabel wears in 'The Extra Girl,'" though I'll admit it looks very becoming on her."

Miss Normand personally designs every piece of wardrobe she wears in any of her pictures. Not only that, but she supervises the making of it as well. As much of the little star's time is devoted to the wardrobe of the principals in her cast, as either her producer or director gives to the many other details of the production.

Miss Normand insists on and gets originality in all her pictures. That much has been frequently admitted, though it is doubtful if her admirers are cognizant of the fact that she alone is responsible for the creation of many of the funny things she wears.

Mabel Normand in "The Extra Girl" continues to play to large audiences at the Mission Theater. Tomorrow will mark the third week of the current engagement, which is a world premiere showing.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, October 14, 1923

" Florence Lawrence²⁰⁵

"My First Day in the Movies"--Mabel Normand

"The first day I ever worked in pictures," said Mabel Normand, "Griffith was directing in the old Biograph Studio in New York. He kept the company so late it was nearly 1 o'clock when I got home, but I had a pay check for \$8.

"I got overtime, you see, for I was just an extra. My mother said: 'No, can't do that,' so I never went back."

Mabel admits she was pretty green about pictures when she began. Alice Joyce told her of the studio and asked her to come down, but the famous little comedienne wasn't interested.

"You see," she admits, "I wanted to be an artist. I was studying painting and drawing at the Art Students' League in New York, and I had to earn the money for my lessons by posing. I worked every morning for Howard Chandler Christy and every afternoon for Henry Hutt. Each of them paid me \$1.50. That \$3 looked like a lot of money when I earned it, but I had to pay 30 cents to get home to Staten Island every night and so I was just about able to pay for my art and piano lessons."

One day Christy gave her a holiday--with pay. She's very careful about that. She didn't have to work and she would get her money so she decided to go down to the old Fourteenth street studio and see what it was all about.

"The first thing I saw when I got inside the studio door," Mabel relates, "was the most beautiful creature--all blonde and dressed up--with big blue eyes and gorgeous golden hair which came nearly to the floor.

"I looked at her and then I looked at myself. I had on a little blue dress my mother made and a trimmed hat. I thought I had a lot of hair, too, but it didn't come anywhere near the floor, so I just said to myself, 'No, you won't do,' and started for the door."

Griffith had seen the little wide-eyed visitor. His name didn't mean much then, and nothing at all for Mabel, but when the messenger he sent stopped her at the door she went back.

"He made me go to work, all dressed up in a page's costume, you know, just a funny little suit without any skirts, and I was terribly embarrassed. All I had to do was to stand still by the side of the beautiful blonde who was a queen, or something."

Finally Mabel admits the work was finished and she got a check and went home.

"I didn't know there was anything more for me to do. I didn't know the pictures went on for two or three days before they were finished, so I went back and posed for my artist again and went to school and got up every morning and practiced my piano lessons from 6 o'clock until 7."

That was the Mabel Normand of ten years ago. Happy, earning her \$3 a day, she dreamed of becoming a great painter whose pictures would be shown in the famous salons of New York.

²⁰⁵ This Florence Lawrence incidentally is *not* Florence Lawrence, the famous "Biograph girl," one of the very first very well known movie stars. It just so happens that this columnist and the actresses had, as a matter of coincidence, the same name. Florence Lawrence, the "Biograph Girl," was, of course, the first star widely recognized by their name in the history of American motion pictures. Prior to her fame, film companies were reluctant to promote their stars for fear that it would make them more expensive to contract - which, needless to say, is exactly what did happen when the star system kicked in. For Florence Lawrence, like numerous other early film stars, acclaim and success was very brief. In her later years, she played small parts where she could find them, but ended up living in poverty. Much else of her time, she spent writing what has been described as "morbid" poetry. Sadly, she ended up committing suicide in 1938. My thanks to William Drew for clearing up this business of the two names.

Yesterday Miss Normand's car stopped before the Biltmore entrance. The doorman smilingly ushered the star of "The Extra Girl" into the Galeria Real. Checkroom girls fluttered with eager eyes as she passed and three head waiters bowed low as she sought a small table for tea. No queen could have been received with more deference; royalty itself could not have accepted the courtesies with a more gracious charm.

While her painting has had to be discarded, the Mabel of today encircles the world with her pictures. Not of oils and canvases, to be sure, but none the less creations of her own art.

It was several months after her first adventure that Mabel finally went back to the studio, and then she played "vamps."

"They dressed me up in long, clinging clothes, taught me to make up and gave me a big hat to wear--oh! a lovely hat--the biggest I'd ever seen," continued the star. "I loved the hat--in fact, I could hardly bear to leave my dressing room mirror to go out on the set."

The little slim girl of 15 or 16 didn't have the opulent figure then considered necessary for the vamping roles, so she describes her efforts at padding.

"I had to use towels to stuff around in the places where I was too little," she chuckles. "Baby vamps and the 'boyish form' hadn't become so popular then.

"Mr. Griffith would say: 'Now thrown back your head and half shut your eyes and look at him that way,' and I'd do it, and on the screen it seemed a wicked look. Then D. W. would snap me out of that mood and say: 'Sparkle, Normand, Sparkle,' and I'd flicker my eyelashes and pout my lips and think I was a regular actress doing heavy stuff."

It was some time before the comedy qualities of the little star were discovered.

"I thought, being dark, I must always play the wicked woman on the screen," Mabel continued. "All the heroines were blondes at first, you know, and I never dreamed I could make any one laugh with me--although they must have laughed at me often enough, I'm sure," she added.

Finally Miss Normand was put into the Griffith stock company, but one day a friend whispered, "I know where you can get a new contract--and get \$100 a week." The sum was unbelievable, but persuasion led the actress to rival producers down the street. Sure enough, there was the new proposition.

"Those men offered me the hundred right enough," said Mabel, "but I just thought it was a joke and wouldn't consider it. I was rattled, too, and kept on saying, 'Why, I couldn't! I'm getting \$25 now from Mr. Griffith. I'd have to ask him first before I promised you.'

"There's nothing in that old bromide about 'he who hesitates is lost,'" adds the star, "because when I'd repeated it often enough that I was getting \$25, they finally raised their own offer and brought out a contract made out for \$125 a week. I signed it and when I got out of the office I was so excited I walked from Sixteenth Street way up to Times Square and back again without an idea of where I was going or why."

That was the contract that brought her to Los Angeles and proved the stepping stone upon which the little actress mounted and mounted up the cinematic scale.

And incidentally, while the silversheet artistry of her smiles and tears became "bigger and better," her name on a contract also became something for producers to think about, especially when they were adding ciphers to that first of the four figures which are necessary to any documents Mabel even considers today.

* from *Photoplay*, November 1923

" Cal York

Jane Cowl's presentation in Los Angeles of "Romeo and Juliet"--one of the finest things ever seen on the American stage--woke a storm of enthusiasm among motion picture artists.

The opening night saw a really amazing gathering in the big auditorium. Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford were there. Norma Talmadge, and Joe Schenck, Constance Talmadge in a green frock with a little tight silver turban, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Earle Williams, Mabel Normand, with Paul Bern²⁰⁶ and wearing the most exquisite summer evening frock of organdy lace and embroidery over coral taffeta, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Brabin (Theda Bara) in an exquisitely draped gown of yellow satin, in a box with Mrs. Leslie Carter. Pola Negri, in black with some artistic and fascinating dashes of Oriental color, Charles Chaplin, William S. Hart, Ethel Clayton, May Allison, Leatrice Joy, in apricot taffeta, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Meighan, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas MacLean, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ray, Mr. and Mrs. William de Mille, and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Niblo (Enid Bennett).

* from *Screenland*, November 1923

Mabel Goes to Seashore

A varied taste in vacations is enjoyed by Mabel Normand. Sometimes she prefers a round of parties with friends, shopping expeditions, and such like urban joys. But usually, especially in summertime, she goes to mountain or seashore. She has a little house up in the Altadena foothills, where she often goes to rest and recuperate. Here she drives her car, hikes and rides horseback.

A friend of mine chanced to be staying near Mabel's Altadena home not long ago. He was driving up the steep and winding road which leads to the place, one hot day, when suddenly his brakes failed to work well, and he nearly shot over the side of the hill. Another car came around the corner just then, and a cheery feminine voice called out,--

"What's the matter? Having trouble with your car? Anything I can do?"

²⁰⁶ *Leatrice Joy*: "Paul Bern was a very dear friend of Mabel Normand and she used to come over and have dinner with us, but I never knew her very well. One time Paul bought a magnificent watch bracelet for Normand. He had it fixed in a little flower bouquet and said he was going out with her to have dinner and ask her to marry him. When he came back, he grabbed this box with the beautiful bouquet and the million-dollar diamond bracelet and threw it in the canyon. All of us in the house, including the Chinese help, went down trying to find it. I don't know whether it was found or not. So when I think of Mabel, I think of that and Paul Bern." From *Speaking of Silents* by William Drew.

A girl alighted, came over and helped him fix the brakes--and when my friend took a good look at her, he discovered that the girl was Mabel Normand. She found him tools from her ample tool chest, and didn't leave him until she saw him on his way.

But Miss Normand's present vacation, between "The Extra Girl" and "Mary Ann," hasn't turned out so pleasantly as usual. She was thrown from her horse, while riding along the beach at Coronado, where she had gone for a few days' rest, and her collar bone was broken. So at the present writing she is in the hospital, with the prospect of several idle weeks before her.

* from *Chateaugay* [N.Y.] *Record*, December 21, 1923

Monday's picture [at the Ideal Theatre] I would call your particular attention to, "Mickey" with Mabel Normand. This is a revival of an old picture that caused such a stir a few years ago.

* from *Chicago Daily News*, Dec. 26, 1923

" Carl Sandburg

The new Mabel Normand picture, *The Extra Girl*, which is opening its run at the Orpheum Theater, has one recommendation to start with, and that is that they took their time with it. Miss Normand is not one of those who comes in a new release every two or three months.

The story of *The Extra Girl* is a good deal like those of Miss Normand's previous pictures. There is a harum-scarum girl around whose life centers a lot of money lost and won, and a bright young man everybody knows is the one who ought to marry her, and a lot of puzzling as to whether in the windup he did win her.

Mack Sennett, the producer, names himself as the author of the story. He aimed at writing what he calls "sure fire stuff." It is all there in this regard. The plain, honest home folks, the good looking daughter, the quarrel as to whether she shall marry a successful businessman or a handsome industrious young man whose prospects are not at all that they might be, the ladder up the side of her house to her room, the escapes and pursuits up and down that ladder, the flight, the forgiveness, the loss of the hard-earned savings and earnings of the plain, honest home folks, the detection and pursuit of the dastard robber.

As to this robber, we must pause. He is a Sennett masterstroke. He seems for all the world to be the bright, energetic, enterprising, sagacious, straightforward young American. His face is his fortune. Anybody would hand him money on his showing the maps of the places where the oil wells are gushing. Yet, after all, he is what he is. We are surprised. It tricks us as life does. And Mr. Sennett knows it and intended it so.

As for Mabel Normand, this is the best acting she has done. There are moments in it when she rises to great pantomimic art, and the revelation of a personality that has tone color, ranges, shadings. No other woman in the movies has so vivid a feeling for the comic mixed with a serious and striking personal loveliness. Her greater work is ahead of her. The important thing is that her work constantly hits a wider gamut.

George Nichols and Anna Hernandez play pa and ma. Ralph Graves has the role of the young man who should marry the heroine. William Desmond and Carl Stockdale are other members of a well-chosen cast. Direction was by F. Richard Jones.

1924

* from *Photoplay*, January 1924

" Terry Ramsaye

...It is amusing to recall that this same season [1910-11] Mabel Normand, by now well established in the graces of Biograph, was lured to Reliance. She appeared in one picture and incurred the displeasure of the director, who declared her work unacceptable.²⁰⁷ She returned to Biograph promptly, eventually to share in the rise of Mack Sennett.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 2, 1924

COURTLAND S. DINES SHOT

By Chandler Sprague

Courtland S. Dines, wealthy oil operator and scion of a well-known Denver, Colo. family, lies at the Receiving Hospital, dangerously, wounded by pistol bullets and Joe Kelly, chauffeur for Mabel Normand, is locked up at Central Station, charged with the shooting.

The attack occurred at 8 o'clock last night in Dines' apartment, 325-B North Vermont avenue, and Kelly, admitting the shooting, claims he fired in self-defense, as Dines was about to hit him with a bottle. The chauffeur declared last night that he went to Dines' apartment as a knight errant, summoned by Miss Normand to take her home, after Dines had refused to allow her to leave the apartment.

He said the pistol with which he shot Dines belonged to Miss Normand.

But Kelley, who is also said to be known as R. C. Greer, is flatly contradicted in his statements by Miss Normand and by Edna Purviance, another well-known star of the screen, who were present in Dines' apartment when the oil operator received his wounds. Kelly fired three times and hit Dines twice. One wound is on the ear and is superficial, but the other went straight through the chest, and Dines is in serious condition.

As a stage setting for the conflicting statements that were puzzling detectives last night was one of the most dramatic scenes in the annals of police headquarters. In the private office of Captain of Detectives George Home sat Assistant Captain Herman Cline and Detective Lieutenant Charles Jarvis. At one side sat Mabel Normand and on the other was Miss Purviance. Between them and facing the officers was Kelley, who was brought in by Lieutenant Ammon and Patrolman Stell after he had voluntarily surrendered and laid his gun on the desk at Wilshire station.

²⁰⁷ This is an interesting little anecdote about Mabel's early film days which is not known to be reported elsewhere. The Reliance film company, which was run by Carlton Motion Picture Laboratories, was one of the first production companies of Kessel and Baumann's New York Motion Picture Company.

While stenographer's pencil flew across his notebook, the statements of the two world-famous stars were taken in contradiction to what Kelley claimed as his reason for the shooting. Scarcely a moment of the chauffeur's story was free from interruption. Miss Normand was most concerned with what she said was a discrepancy in facts, while Miss Purviance, although manifesting a calm, which required a tremendous nerve, was palpably infuriated with Kelley for what she termed an unnecessary shooting.

"What did you do it for!" she said, turning twice and again on Kelley with a look of contempt. "Why did you bring a pistol to Mr. Dines' home? I can't understand it."

Meanwhile Kelley was telling Cline and Jarvis that he was sent to Dines' home by Mrs. Edith Burns, Miss Normand's companion. He declared that Mrs. Burns told him Mabel had phoned and said that she wanted to come home, but that Dines would not let her leave and that she wanted Kelley to come over and escort her home. He says he put Miss Normand's .25 caliber automatic pistol in his pocket as he left, anticipating trouble.

But from the time he arrived at Dines' apartment his story differs radically from that of the two stars of the screen. He told Cline and Jarvis, and he reiterated it under questioning that Miss Normand was seated at one end of the davenport when he entered, after having some difficulty in getting Dines to admit him. He said he made a plea to Miss Normand to come home, and also asked Dines to use his influence to get her to accompany him home, as she was due to enter the hospital tomorrow to undergo an operation.

Kelley said that at first Dines seemed inclined to help him and bent closer to Mabel, talking with her in an apparent attempt to take her chauffeur's advice. But a minute later, according to Kelley, Dines' tone changed and he became hostile to the chauffeur.

"I started to get a little rough then," said Kelley, "when I saw that Dines was not going to help me and was getting peeved. He stood up straight and started to turn around to the table to grab a bottle. That was where the trouble came in."

"What do you mean by the trouble," asked Cline.

"I just shot him, that's all," was the reply. "I was so nervous that the darn gun kept on shooting. It fired three shots, I think, and jammed."

"Did he hit you with a bottle," said Cline?

"No. He didn't get to grab the bottle. I got him before he closed his hand on it."

Kelley then told about going to Wilshire station, laying the gun on the desk and giving himself up. He was through with his story.

But not so Miss Normand and Miss Purviance. Mabel was the first to be questioned. She had manifested her impatience, several times during Kelley's recital by interruptions and corrections and her demeanor was less calm, than that of Miss Purviance, whose constantly swinging feet belied her impassive face.

"What is your name?" said Cline, for purposes of the record, while everyone smiled.

"My name is Mabel Normand," said Mabel, in a clear voice, "and I don't know why this man is telling you these things. I was not sitting on the davenport when he shot Mr. Dines. I was in the other room, talking with Miss Purviance. And the talk was entirely friendly, between Dines and Kelley, as far as I heard it. There was not an angry word and I did not even suspect a quarrel until I heard the shots. I did not see the shots fired."

Miss Normand was so impatient to set right what she claimed were the statements of fact in her chauffeur's story that Cline had considerable difficulty in getting from her a chronological account of the day's happenings. It developed, however, that she had gone to Dines' apartment at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon, having been invited, over the telephone, by Miss Purviance. She admitted calling her house and telling Mrs. Burns to send her chauffeur to bring her home but denied she had intimated that she needed assistance to get away from the apartment.

"This man had no occasion to shoot Dines," she declared.

Questioned regarding her employment of Kelley, Miss Normand said he had been working for her about two months and had been recommended by the agency that sold her the automobile she is using. She said he had taken the place of William Davis, her former chauffeur, who was questioned at length by the police during the investigation into the murder of William Desmond Taylor, noted film director, who was mysteriously shot two years ago.

Kelley, in giving his history to Cline, said he was born and raised in New York city and lived in Los Angeles six years. He stated that he had worked as a chauffeur for several other stars and directors in Hollywood.

It was Miss Purviance's turn next. But before Cline got fairly under way in his questioning she broke out with, "How much longer is this going to last? I want to go to the hospital and find out something about Dines' condition."

She was assured that Dines was asleep and that the surgeons had given him an even chance, whereupon she appeared relieved and told Cline she had arrived at Dines' home about 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon.

"I telephoned Miss Normand," she said, "shortly after I arrived and she came about 4 o'clock, as near as I can remember."

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 2, 1924

Description of Shooting

Courtland S. Dines rented the Vermont avenue court apartment about three months ago.

It occupies the entire second floor of a two-story structure at the back of the plot of land on which the court buildings are situated. A flight of outside cement steps leads to a small porch. The front door gives access to a large living room, with windows on the east, west and north sides.

To the left is the bedroom and to the right is the kitchen. A table was placed in the living room, apparently so that food might be served conveniently.

When an Examiner representative visited the scene of the shooting there were no bottles in sight in the living room anywhere.

There were a number of ash trays on this table with the butts of numerous half-smoked cigarets in the trays. Nor were there any bottles in sight in the kitchen or on the back porch opening from it.

In the bedroom, on a dresser, was an empty bottle which had contained liquor. On a chair was Dines' silk lounging robe. The bed was in disarray.

On the pillow was a large smear of blood and another large spot was about in the center of the sheet.

The bedclothes were disarranged and it looked as if Dines, after being shot, had gone to the bed and lain down. The two spots were on the carpet.

There was no trace of blood in the bathroom.

The one empty bottle on the dresser was the only one seen by The Examiner representative in making a survey of the apartment.

Dines' ties were hanging on the dresser.

* from *New York Times*, January 2, 1924

Normand Family Shocked

This most recent publicity which has come to Miss Mabel Normand caused much discussion yesterday on Staten island where she was born and raised and has many friends and acquaintances. Her mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Claude G. Normand, whom she visits every year, live at 125 St. Mark's Place. New Brighton, Mr. Normand is stage manager for the Stapleton, S.I., Lyceum.

Mrs. Normand said that she was greatly surprised and shocked over the affair and that she was sorry it had occurred as it would bring her daughter notoriety and unnecessary publicity similar to that she received in connection with the shooting of William Desmond Taylor. Mrs. Normand declared that she could make no statement as she had not heard from Miss Normand, and knew nothing other than what she had read in the newspapers.

Mr. Normand asserted that his daughter was quite able to take care of herself and that from what he had read he was sure that she was not implicated in any way. He said he did not expect to hear from her until the arrival of her regular weekly letter and did not believe it would be necessary for either him or Mrs. Normand to go to the coast.

* from *Chicago Tribune*, January 2, 1924

.. Edward Doherty

Los Angeles, Cal., Jan. 1--Mabel Normand and Edna Purviance, moving picture stars, full of New Year's cheer and saturated with tears, were taken into custody late tonight after Mabel's chauffeur had sent a bullet into the breast of Courtland F. Dines, an oil operator from Denver, who is a friend of Miss Purviance. Dines, according to first reports, was fatally hurt. Later reports are more optimistic. One is that neither lung was pierced.

After the two moving picture actresses had been questioned by the police and released they saw to it that Dines was properly cared for in the Good Samaritan hospital. The chauffeur who fired the shot is H. A. Kelly, alias Greer.

The first word of the shooting came to the police from Kelly himself. He arrived at the university police station and said:

"I have just shot a man over at 325 North Vermont Avenue."

The police hurried over to the bungalow at that address. They found the women weeping over Dines who was reclining on a sofa.

"I guess somebody shot him, Mister," said Mabel--with the right amount of cheer in her voice.

Later Kelly, the chauffeur, was booked on a charge of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill and the women were released and allowed to go home.

The place where the shooting occurred, which had been rented by Dines on his arrival from Denver six weeks ago, is a unit in a beautiful series of court bungalows. Edna, who is said to be his fiancée, had been there much of this afternoon. There had been obviously an abundance of drinkables.

Miss Normand says she went to the apartment at 8 o'clock p.m. in her limousine and told her chauffeur she would call him when she wanted him.

"He came in about 9 o'clock or some time," Mabel said in the police station, "without being called. Honest, nobody invited my chauffeur to the party. Why the--well, why should we?"

"And all of a sudden there's some shots. And poor Dines is hit.

"Honest I never saw the shooting. I didn't know nothing about it. I was in the other room, putting some powder on my nose, or maybe smoking a cigarette or something. And Edna was with me--see?"

Edna's story was much the same; but rather vague and indefinite. It was plain though that she was doing her best to recollect. But she had forgotten much. She had even forgotten to button her shoes, until she saw a burly cop grinning at her ankles.

Then Mabel's chauffeur, whom she knows as Greer, told his story. He said he wanted to protect Miss Normand.

"This guy Dines has got a lot of booze," he explained to the interested police and newspaper men. "And he's been keeping poor Mabel so bleary-eyed that she can't do anything. I felt sorry for the kid, and I determined to put a stop to it.

"So this afternoon I went up to Mabel's room. And up in Mabel's room I found this little gat.

"Well, about 8:30 o'clock I takes Mabel over to this Dines' place--on the way to the depot. She was going to see some friends off to the east, Mabel's great like that. Do anything to cheer a friend. She had some flowers--she's always giving flowers to everybody. And she though she'd just step in and say 'hello' and 'happy New Year's.'

"I waited an hour for her to come out. And she didn't come. So I went into the place.

"I saw that Mabel was in no condition to stay there any longer and that Miss Purviance was--well, anyway, I said, 'Come on, Mabel, we're going away from here.'

"She told me I was a kill-joy and that I wasn't a gentleman if I insisted on going around killing her parties.

"I got rough with her--like any man would. And I told her if she didn't come and come right away I'd chuck up the job. I wasn't going to 'chauf,' her around if she insisted on getting drunk every time she could.

"Well, she got up and put her arm on mine and we started out.

"Then this guy Dines started to pick up a bottle. I thought he was going to hit me with it. I'm no roughneck; I'm no cave man. Look me over-- you don't see no ladies' delight about me. Little guy, I am. And him--well, you seen him, didn't you?"

"I wasn't going to let him crack me over the dome with no bottle--no matter if it was a real Haig & Haig bottle. And I pulled the gat and let him have it."

Greer fired three shots, and then ran out to the police station and told the police he had "just shot a guy."

It was really an affecting meeting, that of the movie stars and the oil man, in the ward of the shabby little receiving hospital. It was approximately two hours after the shooting and the girls, having finished with the police quiz, had become almost cold sober.

They were led from the detective bureau by a crowd of admiring cops. Edna, dressed in a cloth of gold evening gown, gold satin slippers and gold silk stockings, with a wrap of gold and green; and Mabel, a Gainsborough picture in black velvet--and plenty of ostrich feathers on her hat.

"Gimmie a cigarette," begged Mabel just before the procession to the receiving hospital began.

"O, daddy," was Edna's greeting to Dines in the hospital.

She took the wounded man's hand in hers and kissed it. The light shone on a big diamond--Edna's.

"Is my sweetie hurt?" she asked of Dines.

The tears began to fall in great splotches from the blond lady's eyes.

"No--I'll be all right," said Dines.

"Lo, Sweetie," said Mabel, with just that exact note of cheer needed for the sick room. "Hoy's the sweetie?"

Edna shoved up the gold bandeau--it threatened to drop over her eyes, and bent and kissed Dines.

"What do you think of that guy saying I tried to hit him with a bottle--" Dines moaned. "Get me a drink of water."

"All my fault," said Mabel, still the cheerfulest soul in the room. "Say, he told everybody I saw the shooting. Huh--and if he says it again I'll take a couple shots at him."

Mabel pushed Edna out of the way and repeated that it was all her fault and that she ought to take a couple of shots at somebody...

* from *Chicago Tribune*, January 3, 1924²⁰⁸

" Edward Doherty

(Los Angeles)--Jan. 2--Mabel Normand and Edna Purviance, movie stars, who were present when Mabel's chauffeur shot Edna's sweetheart, Courtland S. Dines, last night, will have to tell their stories to the police at least once more.

...An unvoiced, passionate love for his "movie queen" employer and jealousy of her host is believed by the police to have caused Horace A. Greer, the driver, to shoot Dines.

But Mabel herself objects strenuously to this view;

"A chauffeur with a gun!" she said tonight. "Deliver me."

Mabel was more articulate today but not so full of pep. Her fingers trembled a little as she lit a cigarette. She had just been reading the newspapers and the police version of the affair seemed to anger her.

"Blah, blah," said Mabel. "Slush, the poor boob was nuts. He was only one of the servants, and he was treated like one. Why, I didn't even treat him like--well I've had a lot of good chauffeurs. And good gawd, I didn't even hire this egg. My secretary did that."

Some one asked Mabel about the gat.

"Well my gawd," she said, "I didn't know how he had it. He says he got it out of my room. What business had he in my room--my bedroom? Say, I hope I drop dead if this ain't the truth--that man had been in my room only twice that I know of--once to fix my curler and once to fix an electric plug. Honest.

"Somebody gave me that gat to shoot bottles with. I broke a lot of nice mountains shooting at bottles, but I had a lot of fun. And he says I was in the room when he cut loose with the gat, and he wasn't shooting at bottles, either. I wasn't in the room at all. I was in Edna's room. She was putting on her evening gown and it wasn't hooked up and I didn't want this egg to see her.

"Then all of a sudden, bang, bang, bang. I thought they were firecrackers. The kind I used to throw at Ben Turpin. Poor old Ben, he'd look at me so funny."

Mabel tried to give an imitation of Ben doing the east and west and nearly strangled on cigarette smoke.

Edna was lying in bed when the reporters came. She was dressed in a nightie and a pretty orchid kimono. Her blond hair was sadly disturbed, and her eyes were hidden by dark glasses in horn rims. She remembered some details overlooked or unrecalled last night. She was quite certain today that Mabel was with her.

"Yes, I was powdering my nose," she said, "and Mabel came in and said, 'Don't be a pig, Eddie, let me see Mabel in the glass and give me some of your powder.'"

This coincides with Mabel's story--but it is directly opposed to Greer's.

"Mabel was sitting on the davenport," he said, "and she had just put her arm on mine and we were going out when Dines makes a grab for that bottle and I let him have it. Mabel screamed."

Greer said today he meant to fire only one, but he shot three bullets out of the gun before he knew it. The gun jammed on the fourth shot.

"Why," Edna said, "that chauffeur just came in the door and started shooting. That's all there was to it. No argument or anything so far as I know."

Edna is not going to lose her job with Charlie Chaplin because of the trouble--but Charlie plows nervous hands through his crinkly gray hair.

²⁰⁸ Bruce Long: "These last two articles were written by Edward Doherty. In his autobiography, *Gall and Honey: The Story of a Newspaperman*, Doherty told of visiting Mabel Normand in the hospital at a later date, at which time she told him: 'Eddie, I thought you were the devil himself, because you always quoted me exactly as I talked. Yes, you hurt me. But I've called you all the different kinds of s.o.b. a woman can call a man. Now I see you're a nice Irish Catholic boy; and I'll bet your mother makes you go to church when you're home, doesn't she? Like mine. Kiss me again, and let's be friends.'" Doherty continues: "We were friends until she died, and I had several opportunities to say nice things about her while she lived. So did Mildred, who was then writing a column called 'Hollywood Society.'"

"The poor kid," he says, "she's worried stiff. She doesn't know whether she's going to be fired or not. Of course I'm not going to fire her. We all get into trouble some time.

"But whether she will have the lead in my next picture--I--uh--have a cigar. You see, we've been trying out a lot of people for that role. We've been trying to get a girl who is smaller than Edna, and --well, I don't know.

"But of course her present trouble has not a thing to do with that. You understand how types are cast? That's it. We want a certain type for the lead in my new picture."

There was talk during the interview with Charley and Edna about a little strip of film showing a man removing a splinter from Edna's beautiful knee.

"My God," said Edna.

"But you wouldn't publish that," said Charley. "What would be the point?"

"No, we're not going to print that picture," the newspaper man assured him. "We haven't found it."

Edna explained that she was and she wasn't engaged to Dines. For about six months, she said, she and Court had an understanding, and, although he hadn't given her a betrothal ring they intended to get married. She added that she was terribly fond of the wounded man.

Edna then proceeded to touch more in detail the high spots of the evening's events.

"I had promised Mr. Dines to have dinner and in the middle of the afternoon I dropped in at his bungalow. There were some others there, too. It was a sort of New Year's open house all over Hollywood and there were callers at the bungalow through the whole afternoon.

"Soon after reaching the house I went to a telephone and called Mabel and asked her to come on over. It wasn't long till she arrived. Her chauffeur, Greer, brought her over.

"Folks kept dropping in and finally, shortly before 7, Mr. Dines said he'd step into his room and dress for dinner.

"None of the three of us were intoxicated. We had some drinks, but not many. Only a moment, it seemed, after Mr. Dines started to change his clothes for dinner and just after Mabel and I were in a room leading off the living room--powdering our noses--the three shots sounded from the other room. That's the whole of it."

The police theory is that Greer was in love with Mabel, and that he wanted to pose as a hero, a caveman, in her eyes, and take her away from the man who was giving her booze.

"I wouldn't ever aspire to love such a wonderful, beautiful, great movie star," Greer said today. "Me, one lung, a little guy? I like her and all that, and she's been kinder to me than anybody I ever met. Gave me some platinum cuff links Christmas day. Big hearted, that's what she is--always doing something for somebody.

"Well, I told you how Miss Burns, Mabel's companion, got a call from her, asking to have me sent over to Dines' for her. And how she told me a man took Mabel from the phone and hollered that she wouldn't be home. I went over there. I knew Mabel had to have an operation, for I guess it's appendicitis. And I knew it wasn't doing her any good to get soused. But you know Mabel--she can't say no--too darn good hearted."

Edna told reporters this afternoon that Mabel hadn't called Miss Edith Burns, her housekeeper, or anybody else.

"I was with her all the time, of course, and I know she didn't use the telephone," she insisted.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 3, 1924

Dines, In Great Agony, Battles For Life As Police Quiz Chauffeur

Courtland Dines was fighting death at the Good Samaritan Hospital last night.

Mabel Normand was in the same institution under the care of her personal physician, Dr. Dudley Fulton. She had broken under the strain of the shooting and was denied to all callers under orders of her doctor. Whether she was to undergo an appendicitis operation, anxiety over which was given as one of the causes of the shooting, could not be learned.

Horace A. Greer, her chauffeur, who claims he shot Dines in self-defense, was revealed as a former convict, in spite of all his claims that he had no police record.

Dines was in grave condition at midnight. A special nurse was in constant attendance. Dr. Guy Cochran, his physician, said:

"Mr. Dines is resting as easily as could be expected. I do not care to say anything as to the probable outcome of his injuries at this time."

The doctor would say no more, but The Examiner learned Dines is in great pain. He is in a very serious condition. Every breath causes him agony. He is fighting a double danger. Pneumonia is developing. There also is the added menace of blood poison, always present in such cases.

Miss Normand entered the hospital about 8 o'clock with her physician and her personal maid. She was rushed to a room immediately. The greatest secrecy was exercised by the superintendent and all other attaches. They would not say that she was there. It was learned, however, that she was resting easily.

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Shortly before she was taken to the hospital, Miss Normand gave The Examiner an interview in which she denied that Greer had any affection for her and gave her first connected story of the shooting. She stated that Miss Purviance was engaged to Dines and had been for three months.

Miss Purviance corroborated the reported engagement and said that she and the victim of the chauffeur's shot had understood for the last six months that they were to wed, although she never had received an engagement ring.

The pretty star told of gay yachting parties that Miss Normand, Dines, a millionaire, and herself had taken on a yacht. She spoke of one trip to Catalina, where they made playful motion pictures, some of which are printed in this edition of The Examiner.

Greer's alibi as to a former police record was broken last night by J. Roy Harlacher of the Police Bureau of Records. He was confronted with rogue photographs, finger prints and a record of his arrest and conviction in Oakland in 1914 for petty larceny, under the name of Harris [sic] Greer.

It also developed during the questioning that Greer escaped from the chain gang of the Oakland City jail after serving a few days of his sentence, and had never been recaptured.

Notice of his escape was broadcast, but he slipped through, and for ten years lived, as though he had never seen the Northern City.

He was taken into custody in 1914 by Officers Carp, Fahey and O'Hara. His convict number was 4648.

When Harlacher confronted Greer last night, Greer maintained stoutly that he had never been arrested before. An operator was "rolling" his fingers in the ink, and then transfixing the telltale prints on the regulation form.

"What's the meaning of this?" Harlacher asked Greer.

Greer was taken aback. He colored up under his stubble black beard and finally burst out with:

"Oh-that yes, I had almost forgotten it."

"Did they ever get you after you escaped from the chain gang?" Harlacher came back.

"Well, no, but I've written to the warden up there several times," Greer stammered.

When Courtland Dines was fighting for his life the police homicide squad was unraveling all possible threads in the tangled web surrounding the pistol bullets fired Tuesday night at the wealthy oil operator by Horace A. Greer, chauffeur for Mabel Normand.

If Dines should die, his slayer will be the center of one of Los Angeles most perplexing murder mysteries. Perplexing not as to the author of the crime, but as to the motive. Why did Greer shoot Dines? What prompted him to the act?

These are the questions that were puzzling Assistant Captain Herman Cline and Detective Lieutenant Jarvis and Craig yesterday. Somewhere, back of the shooting, lies a story of which as yet they have been able only to touch the edges. Greer's story that Dines reached for a bottle with which to hit him is discounted by the detectives. They do not believe it. Dines denies it, says he had no reason to do it, and if he had wanted to hit the chauffeur he would have used his fists. The size of the two men bears this out. Greer is a little man. Dines a big one.

Assuming that Dines did not provoke the shot, Greer must have gone to the Dines' home with killing in his heart, ready to shoot. And this is supported by his taking a pistol with him and holding it in readiness in the side pocket of his coat.

Why? What had he been told that incensed him against Dines?

Miss Normand says Greer had manifested no sentiment toward her in any way and that before this occurrence she had regarded him merely as an automaton, an excellent servant, who had been in her employ but two months. And the officers and those who have talked with her and who have seen Greer believe this to be the exact truth. Greer's state of mind is therefore to be accounted for only on the theory of an imaginative devotion by the chauffeur to his employer.

But in the belief of the detectives that state of mind was stimulated, especially during Tuesday afternoon. And to learn just how that stimulation came, Jarvis talked at length yesterday with Mrs. Edith Burns, companion to Miss Normand.

The officers reconstructed the scene at the Normand home during that afternoon as follows:

Greer, an apparently harmless individual, a sober, industrious chauffeur, who had manifested no peculiarities was engaged in dismantling a Christmas tree. Assisting him in packing away the decorations was Mrs. Burns. Mabel goes to Dines' home and Greer returns and continues to work on the tree. Still, as far as can be learned, perfectly normal in mind.

Then comes a telephone call. Mrs. Burns answers. It is from Mabel. Mr. Dines has forgotten a package, a Christmas gift from Mrs. Burns. When Joseph comes to bring her home will he bring over the package? And a short time afterward, Joseph starts for the Dines home. But before he leaves, something that causes him to go there armed with a ready pistol; something which causes him to shoot Dines after a conversation of but a minute. What was it that happened. That is what the police want to know.

According to Greer, this is what happened. And it may be true, at least in part. He says that Mrs. Burns told Mabel over the phone that she was sending Joseph to bring her home. And then she put her hand over the phone, turned to Greer and said: "Do you see. I heard Dines say, 'No, you don't go home.'"

"Then," says Greer, "in a fit I sort of ran upstairs and grabbed the gun. I have lung trouble and heart trouble and can't stand up and fight."

He expected a fight then. Why? Who told him he would have to fight?

Mrs. Burns denies this conversation emphatically. She says Greer was standing by a tree where he could overhear the conversation, but that she did not comment upon it to him while it was going on.

"I might have mentioned to him," she said yesterday, when being questioned by Jarvis, that Mr. Dines had said it was very early for Mabel to come home. I don't remember even doing that."

Mrs. Burns said she could see no reason why Greer should have any quarrel with Mr. Dines, and that the shooting and its motive was as much a mystery to her as to anyone. But the police point out that the immediate moving force which sent Greer on what may prove to be a mission of death came from events surrounding that telephone call. They are not satisfied with their information on that point and both Greer and Mrs. Burns will be questioned again today.

In examining Greer yesterday Captain Cline sought to get him to explain further his reasons for the shooting.

"You insisted on your employer returning home," he said. "Why did you do that?"

"For the simple reason that she is run down and needed the rest at home."

"But what business of that was yours? You think quite a lot of Mabel Normand, don't you?"

"Just as a boss, that's all."

"Well, you must have taken quite an interest, to act the way you did."

"Yes, I suppose I did," said Greer. "But all her friends feel the same way, all her real friends."

Then Cline asked him: "Did you give Dines any chance? Did you give him an opportunity to drop the bottle you say he reached for? Did you have any argument?"

"No, there was no argument at all. He looked at me as if to say. 'This is a fine idea for a chauffeur to come up here and tell this girl it's time for her to go home.'"

"Well, wasn't that, perhaps, a natural way for him to feel?"

"I don't know. I didn't know him long enough to know what his feelings would be about anything."

Greer's reasons for changing his name were not satisfactory to the detectives and they are investigating the matter further.

"I changed my name when I stepped off the train at Los Angeles," said Greer. "I became Joe Kelley then. I determined to make my success and then have the name I had adopted be emblematic of my success. But I've always told every one that Greer was my real name."

He said he had worked under the name of Greer at Buffalo, N. Y., for one Jack Bryers, who operates a wool carding company and that he had been employed here by the Bristol Taxicab Company as a mechanic. His parents, he said, live at 1437 Amsterdam avenue, New York, and his father's name is John Greer. During the war, he declared, he enlisted in the Twenty-third Aero Squadron at Fort Slocum and was stationed at Waco, Tex. and Mineola, L.I. He said he was discharged because of heart trouble.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 3, 1924

Normand Senior Hopes To Hear From Mabel

New York -- Clyde [sic] Normand, father of Mabel Normand, film star, who was questioned today in the shooting of C. S. Dines at his Los Angeles bungalow, had heard nothing from Miss Normand in regard to the affair, he said today. He said he expected to hear from her tonight.

"All Mrs. Normand and I know of this Los Angeles matter is what we have read in the newspapers," he said.

Normand is a carpenter on Staten Island and works nights as stage manager of a clubroom there.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 3, 1924

Mabel Normand Tells Story of Shooting By Chauffeur

by Chandler Sprague

"Absolutely preposterous."

It was heard that Mabel Normand used these words yesterday to characterize the theory advanced by the police that Horace A. Greer, her chauffeur, had shot Cortland [sic] S. Dines because of a hopeless infatuation for his young mistress.

Miss Normand was discovered at her apartment late yesterday afternoon, after having been missing all day. Perhaps "discovered" is not the proper word, however, because she had been at home all the time, but had given her maid orders to deny all callers.

"I hate to talk about the matter at all," she said. "For Mr. Dines to have come to harm at the hands of my chauffeur is so unreasonable, so absolutely unjust, that I still am groping mentally to fathom it. I felt at first, and I think it was an entirely natural feeling, that I did not want to discuss the matter with newspaper men. But after consideration, I feel that I owe it to Mr. Dines and to Miss Purviance to do everything I can to make the public understand that this shooting was the act of an irresponsible person and that no more blame should attach to any of the three of us than if we were bystanders, injured in a street melee.

"The theory of the police that Joe shot Mr. Dines because of an infatuation for me is utterly ridiculous," continued Miss Normand. "Of course that is what I would be expected to say, I suppose. But it happens to be true. It is borne out by the facts.

"It is possible, as they say, that Joseph felt he was being a hero when he went to bring me home last night. But if he did, it was born of an exaggerated sense of his duty to me as his employer, rather, than from any silly sentimental idea. If there had been any such absurd notion in his head he would have showed it, one way or another, long ago. A man, even if he is a servant, does not carry around these ideas without unconsciously displaying them. And his demeanor, in the two months he has worked for me, has never varied in the slightest degree from what a chauffeur's should be toward his employer."

Miss Normand's appearance was much improved over that of Tuesday night. The night's rest had made a great change in her. Sitting in the quiet of her apartment, she told Detective Lieutenant Charles Jarvis, who accompanied the newspaper men, the history of Greer's service with her.

"I knew him as Joe Kelly," she said, "and I've never had any reason to believe he had any other name. I would never have had occasion to discuss the matter with him, anyhow, as I've never talked with him except to tell him where I wanted to go and when he was to return for me. My secretary engaged him after he had twice applied for the position. I understand he furnished excellent references and he was a very careful and competent driver.

"It was about two months ago, I believe, that he came to work for me and up to this time, I've never had an occasion to complain of him. Yesterday he was dismantling a little Christmas tree in the living room and under the direction of Mrs. Burns, my companion, he was packing the ornaments in boxes and putting them away for another year. Between 4 and 8 o'clock he was interrupted in this work to take me over to Mr. Dines' home where Edna and Mr. Dines were waiting for me. I told him I would telephone when I wanted him to come for me.

"We sat around and talked awhile," the diminutive star continued, "and about 7:30 I telephoned Mrs. Burns to tell her that Mr. Dines had left a package at my house and that Joseph was to bring it when he returned for me. The package contained a Christmas gift from Mrs. Burns to Dines that he had forgotten the last time he was at my home. Edith (Mrs. Burns) told me at that time she would send Joe over in a little while."

As Miss Normand approached the events of the shooting, she lost a part of the calm which had characterized her, heretofore, daring the interview. Her tone became more decided and she seemed to be trying to make us see, as she saw it, the scene at Dines' apartment.

"When Joseph came in he gave Mr. Dines the packages and asked me if I was ready to go home. I remember Mr. Dines saying something about it being early and I rose from the davenport where I had been sitting and walked to the door of the next room, where Edna was standing. As I stood in the door and began to talk with her I heard the shot and turning saw that Mr. Dines was wounded and that Joseph was going out the door."

"Why did Kelly take the gun when he went over to Dines' place?" asked Jarvis.

"I haven't the slightest idea," replied Miss Normand. "I would like to know the answer to that question as much as you. How he knew it was in the house, even, is beyond me. It has been in a drawer in my room for months. During that time he has been there twice that I can remember. Once he was sent to repair an electric hair dryer. And the other time he had to fix a light fuse. Both times he was alone in the room and it is possible that the drawer was open and he saw the pistol. But why he should have put it in his pocket is more that I can tell. The whole affair is so absolutely without reason that it is saddening. It certainly seems terribly unjust that so many people should suffer over the thoughtless act of an irresponsible boy."

"What is the history of that pistol?" said Jarvis.

"It is very brief," said Miss Normand. "It, or one just like it, was given me several years ago when I was doing 'Mickey,' on location. I don't even remember, now, who gave it to me. Almost every one carried protection of some sort when we were on location in the mountains or desert. We used to put bottles up on the rocks and shoot at them. I never hit one, but I used to like to try. And two years later, when we were filming 'Suzanna' on location, I remember seeing several other pistols just like it and shooting again at a mark with other members of the company. Whether this is the pistol that was originally given to me or whether I changed with someone else I don't know."

As Miss Normand finished she drew the living room curtain aside and peered out the window. "Look at this," she said. "Just come here and look at this. Isn't it terrible?"

Outside, pacing back and forth were others, less fortunate by force of circumstances than those of us who had happened along at the psychological moment and found entrance to the house. Their cars were parked at the curb in a seemingly endless procession. Passerby, attracted by the commotion and learning that Mabel Normand lived in the house, lingered in the hope of seeing her emerge. It was a fair-sized crowd, momentarily growing larger, as we peered forth.

"Isn't that awful?" she said. "And whose fault is it? What have we done? What has Miss Purviance done or Mr. Dines or myself, that this should be visited upon us? A chauffeur, forsooth, gets the idea that I need protection and that he is about to be assaulted by a bigger man. He shoots -- and that crowd out there is the result. It's all so terribly unjust that I -- I don't know what to do."

Mabel's last words, as we started to close the door, were:

"What a frightful mess -- and over nothing at all, that I have yet been able to find out."

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 3, 1924

'I Took Gun In Rage,' Avers Greer In Quiz

"So I ran upstairs in a fit of rage, went into Miss Normand's room and got the pistol out of her dresser drawer."

That was the simple way in which Horace A. Greer, alias Joe Kelley, told police yesterday in an amplified statement how he obtained the weapon he used to shoot Courtland Dines, Miss Normand's host.

Greer was questioned for more than an hour yesterday by Acting Captain of Detectives Cline and Detective Lieutenants Jarvis and Craig. He told substantially the same story that he had told the night before, but supplied additional details.

"What is your right name?" he was asked.

"Horace A. Greer," he replied.

"Why do you use the name Kelley?"

"I had a notion to use that name when I came out here six years ago," he answered. "There was no particular reason for doing it. I have never been in trouble with the police, and whenever I bought anything, such as an automobile and real estate, I always put the property in my right name."

"I lived at 1487 Amsterdam avenue in New York City and my people are still there. I am 30 years old and I am a mechanic and chauffeur."

"I have been working for Miss Normand for three months. I got the job through an automobile service. I was not acquainted with Miss Normand before going to work for her -- in fact, I had never seen her."

"When did you drive Miss Normand to Dines' apartment?"

"It was about 5 or 6 o'clock, as I remember. When I left her there, she ordered me to go back to her house and pack the Christmas tree decorations so they could be put away for next year. I was told to wait for a telephone call from Miss Normand when she wanted to come back home."

"About 7:30 p.m., Miss Normand called and Mrs. E. Burns, her housekeeper, answered the telephone. I was standing near by. Mrs. Burns, still holding the receiver, turned to me and said:

"She wants you to bring over that box for Mr. Dines.' I waited because the telephone conversation had not ended. As I stood there, Mrs. Burns suddenly clapped her hand over the mouthpiece and said:

"I just heard him say to her; No, you can't go home.'"

"Well, now I knew that Miss Normand was due to go to a hospital for an operation -- don't know just what kind of an operation, maybe appendicitis. I wanted to get her home so she would be in some shape for the operation. And it seemed to me there might be some trouble about getting her away from where she was."

"So I ran upstairs in a fit of rage and took Miss Normand's gun, the one she uses on location, from her dresser drawer."

"Did you ever carry that gun before?" an officer asked.

"No."

"Why did you go there for it?"

"Because I have lung and heart trouble and can't stand up and fight like a man. And I thought there was going to be trouble, as I was going to insist on her coming home."

"Why were you going to insist on that?"

"Well, she was run down and was going to be operated on."

"You think quite a lot of Mabel, don't you?"

"Just as my boss. That woman when she is sober is the sweetest little woman in the world. I am just like all the people, men and women, who are her real friends. They all feel the same way about her."

Greer then told how he took the package for Dines and went to the apartment. He knocked on the door and Dines asked:

"Who's there?"

He answered that it was "Joe." Then he waited about five minutes, when there seemed to be no indication that the door was to be opened. So he knocked again and explained that he had a package for the host. After another brief wait he was admitted to the apartment, where Dines, Miss Normand and Edna Purviance were. He handed the package to Dines and then asked Miss Normand if she was ready to go home.

"She mumbled something in answer," he continued, "but I could not understand what it was. So I went over to her on the couch and touched her foot, so she could be able to stand up. Dines bent over her and said something -- I don't know what it was.

"He seemed to act kind of sneaky and his expression seemed to be:

"This is a fine thing for a chauffeur to come up here and demand that his employer go home."

"I picked up Miss Normand's coat and walked toward her. Then Dines threw out his arm as though to throw me back. There was a bottle on the table behind him. I shot before he could reach the bottle."

"Did you say anything before you shot?"

"No."

"What was your idea in getting that gun from Miss Normand's room?"

"To protect myself in case I was attacked."

"How did you know the gun was there?"

"I had seen it many times -- in fact I tried to get Miss Normand to get rid of it."

"Is Miss Normand using dope now?"

"Not that I know of, but Mrs. Burns said she thought Miss Normand would be better off without some of those friends."

The young prisoner took his questions calmly and seemed to be of the opinion that he had done a worthy act.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 3, 1924

· Edna Purviance's version of Dines shooting

"Mr. Dines and I were engaged -- and yet we were not engaged, if you understand what I mean.

"He never gave me an engagement ring, but there was an understanding between us that we would be married. There was no date. We had not even considered any certain date for our wedding.

"We had been thus engaged, I should say, for five or six months."

Edna Purviance in a fluffy silk garment of pink and white, leaned wearily back against the piled up cushions of her bed. Her eyes were moist. She spoke with a visible effort.

"I met him when he first came here, about a year ago. There was a dinner or dance or something; I can't remember now. We were introduced and -- and, well, I guess we rather liked each other.

"After that our friendship grew and grew. I am not ashamed to say that I am most terribly fond of him.

"We were together a great deal, of course. He was wonderful.

"About six months ago we entered into a mutual understanding which was the equivalent to an engagement to be married.

"We never considered an engagement ring necessary, but there was another reason why I did not want one, and that was that we wanted to keep our engagement a secret -- our own secret.

"And now I suppose the world will know it."

Miss Purviance wore dark spectacles. She had apparently wept a great deal. It was yesterday mid-afternoon, but she said she had not slept since Courtland S. Dines, her fiancée, was shot down in his own apartment by Horace A. Greer.

As an indication of the mutual friendship which existed between herself and Dines, Miss Purviance cited a yachting trip taken some six months ago to Catalina Island.

"It was on the yacht of a man whose name I don't want to mention unless I have to," she said. "I can't see why any more people should be dragged into this affair. But he was a friend of Miss Normand and for that matter, of mine.

"He has a gorgeous yacht in the Los Angeles Harbor and during the summer he arranged a little party for a cruise to Catalina. There were he and Miss Normand, Mr. Dines and I, and the members of the yacht's crew and servants.

"We had a perfectly harmless cruise. We left the harbor one morning -- think it was a Saturday, and cruised direct to Catalina. The yacht was very spacious and marvelously equipped, and we docked that afternoon at Avalon.

"The next afternoon we came back to Los Angeles. The cruise was entirely lacking in anything wrong or malicious. I understand that certain minds will draw inferences from the fact that there were just the four of us, but I will deny that there was the slightest ground for any inference of a malicious nature.

"It was simply and solely a weekend outing in which four respectable persons engaged. It was no more wrong than a hiking trip to the mountains, or a motor trip, to some place of recreation, and those are taken every day by thousands of people.

"And so we went to Catalina Island and returned and went about our respective businesses. But during this trip the deep friendship between Mr. Dines and myself was cemented more firmly. I think that is doubly true because during the whole trip he never failed to conduct himself as a perfect gentleman.

"The host had a small motion picture camera -- one of those tiny pocket things. He took quite a number of pictures, and we all stood on the deck and struck attitudes -- foolish, but a healthy outlet for high spirits.

"Around the studios we would call it 'clowning.' The pictures were taken when we were all in exuberant moods, and we struck all sorts of silly poses. I hope they will not be misunderstood."

As another indication of their affection, Miss Purviance mentioned that as a Christmas gift Mr. Dines sent her a jet "vanity" of a new pattern. He also sent her a gift on her birthday. She came down at last to the Yuletide seasonal festivities which had their tragic culmination in Dines' apartment.

They went out together on New Year's eve -- to the Cocoanut Grove at the Ambassador. They were in a party of ten -- three married couples, Dines and Miss Purviance. She declined to give the names of the other guests "because," she said, "I don't feel that it is necessary for them to figure in this unfortunate thing."

The party was not very exciting -- in fact it was rather dull. This was not due to the other guests, but to the general spirit of oppression that seemed to prevail. However, it continued until 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, when Dines, she said, took her home. He kissed her good-night and went away.

"On New Year's Day," she said, "everybody was having 'open house,' as is the custom in Hollywood. We had made an engagement to meet for dinner that day. About 3 o'clock I went over to his apartment, and other people were there. In fact, his friends kept dropping in off and on all afternoon."

As in the other instance, she declined to give names.

"As soon as I got in the house," she said, "I phoned Mabel -- Mabel Normand, and asked her to come over. She said she would be there right away. In about half an hour, I should judge, she arrived. I think the time was between 3:30 and 4 o'clock."

"The chauffeur, Kelly, drove her over. I heard her tell him she would call him when she wanted him to return. He went away."

"We sat around and entertained the people who called, and talked till about 7 o'clock. Mr. Dines had just mentioned that he would have to go dress for dinner. He was wearing a soft suit of some kind."

"It would be foolish to say that there was nothing to drink during the afternoon, of course there was. But there was not a great deal to drink, and none of us drank very much. I know that Mabel was not intoxicated, and neither was I, and neither was Mr. Dines."

"When he said he must dress for dinner, I stepped into the living room just off the living room and took out my powder puff and started to powder my nose. Mabel stepped in just behind me."

"Don't be selfish," she said, "let me use it too."

"And at that instant, without a preliminary warning of any kind, there were three sharp shots from the other room!"

"Mabel and I ran out immediately. There was no one in sight but Mr. Dines. The front door was closed. We had not heard it open nor close, nor any peal of the bell, nor any rap at the door."

"Mr. Dines was standing there, smiling in a sort of funny way."

"Well," he said, "I got plugged!"

"He continued to stand there with his hand over his white shirt front smiling. Then all at once, as I watched the fingers over his breast, I saw the blood begin to seep through. I am not sure what I did then, nor what Mabel did, nor what was said, if anything."

"Mr. Dines began to totter, but he never stopped smiling. I think we ran to his side, Mabel on one side and I on the other, and led him to the bedroom. He was getting weak. We laid him on the bed and tore off most of his clothing. We put on his dressing gown, or bathrobe, or whatever it was, that we found in the closet."

"I am not sure what we did next. I know we tried to stop the bleeding, but it would not stop. Almost at once, it seems to me now, the ambulance and the police were there."

"I never saw Kelly, or Greer, or whatever his name is, from the time he first brought Miss Normand to the house until the time he was brought into the room with us at the police station."

* from the *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 3, 1924

Sennett Has No Contract With Mabel Normand

Officials at the Sennett Studio said yesterday that Mabel Normand is not under contract to the comedy producer and that she has not been for several years. Her appearance in Sennett pictures during this time has been under one-picture agreements, it was explained.

The press agent at the studio, the same one who was actively interested in keeping investigators away from Miss Normand during the efforts to solve the Taylor murder mystery, said yesterday that he could not say authoritatively whether or not Miss Normand's connection with the shooting would have any effect on the showing of her pictures throughout the country or for future agreements with Sennett.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 3, 1924

• Courtland Dines' account of shooting

"Guess the girls will miss me. They'll be lonesome without me!"

With the ghost of a smile flitting across his features, Courtland S. Dines leaned back on his hospital pillow last night and "wondered where the girls were."

"Poor Mabel," he sighed. "She gets so lonesome. I used to take her around to different places and keep her from pining. Not much for her, I guess."

"Edna and I and Mabel always went around a good deal together. We three were just the best pals in the world."

"I don't know why that fellow ever shot me. He was just full of hop -- that's the only way I can figure it out!" said the wounded man, recounting the events leading up to the shooting in his apartment.

"You see, Edna and I were out to the Ambassador on New Year's Eve -- nothing wrong, you know -- just a good time with some other folks. After that the party just naturally continued during New Year's Day."

"Edna came over in the afternoon and later Mabel telephoned. She wanted to know what was going on and we just told her to come over and see. Well, she breezed over and said she was going to put the house in order."

"We were the best of pals -- we three -- you know how Mabel is -- the best little girl in the world -- and she dragged out all the brooms and mops in the place and insisted on cleaning up."

"Well, of course, we all felt pretty low and we did have something to drink. Then this man Kelly, or whatever his name is, came over -- "

Dines winced with pain as he tossed on his pillow and continued to talk in spite of doctor's orders.

"I suppose I'll kick the bucket this time!" he added, making a brave attempt to smile. "But that fellow lies when he says I tried to hit him with a bottle. No such thing. He just turned the gun on me and fired. I was the most surprised man in the world when he did.

"You see we had been sort of arguing about her going to the train to meet some friends. I advised her not to go out. I told her she was in no condition to go out in public and be seen at the station.

"But she wouldn't listen to me and telephoned for Greer to come over and drive her to the station. When the chauffeur got there he just simply announced that Mabel was going with him.

"You know how Mabel is. No one can do much with her. I was at the Coronado Hotel at a party a few months ago when she broke her shoulder because she wouldn't listen to reason!

"The chauffeur butted in and when I protested that Mabel shouldn't go out -- why, he just whipped out his gun and started shooting."

* from *Chicago Tribune*, January 3, 1924

" Richard Henry Little

Mabel says that she was standing in front of a mirror powdering her nose when Mr. Dines was shot. When the late Mr. Taylor was shot Mabel was sitting in her limousine eating peanuts. If we ever happen to be near Mabel and see her dip her fingers in a finger bowl, or smell of a flower, or fix her hair, we are going to jump right for the telephone and tell the police to hurry out with the ambulance. Mabel is a nice girl, but whenever she does some perfectly innocent, trifling things the reporters are busy marking an X in the photograph to show where the body was found.

* from *Chicago Tribune*, January 3, 1924

" Edward Doherty

Los Angeles, Jan. 2 - Mabel Normand and Edna Purviance, movie stars, who were present when Mabel's chauffeur shot Edna's sweetheart, Courtland S. Dines, last night, will have to tell their stories to the police at least once more.

...An unvoiced, passionate love for his "movie queen" employer and jealousy of her host is believed by the police to have caused Horace A. Greer, the driver, to shoot Dines.

But Mabel herself objects strenuously to this view:

"A chauffeur with a gun!" she said tonight. "Deliver me."

Mabel was more articulate today but not so full of pep. Her fingers trembled a little as she lit a cigarette. She had just been reading the newspapers and the police version of the affair seemed to anger her.

"Blah, blah," said Mabel. "Slush, the poor boob was nuts. He was only one of the servants, and he was treated like one. Why, I didn't even treat him like -- well I've had a lot of good chauffeurs. And good gawd, I didn't even hire this egg. My secretary did that.

Someone asked Mabel about the gat.

"Well, my gawd," she said, "I didn't know how he had it. He says he got it out of my room. What business had he in my room my bedroom? Say, I hope I drop dead if this ain't the truth - that man had been in my room only twice that I know of -- once to fix my curler and once to fix an electric plug. Honest.

"Somebody gave me that gat to shoot bottles with. I broke a lot of nice mountains shooting at bottles, but I had a lot of fun. And he says I was in the room when he cut loose with the gat, and he wasn't shooting at bottles, either. I wasn't in the room at all. I was in Edna's room. She was putting on her evening gown and it wasn't hooked up and I didn't want this egg to see her.

"Then all of a sudden, bang, bang. I thought they were firecrackers. The kind I used to throw at Ben Turpin. Poor old Ben, he'd look at me so funny."

Mabel tried to give an imitation of Ben doing the east and west and nearly strangled on cigarette smoke...

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 4, 1924

Mabel Normand Films Banned by Memphis Censor

John M. Dean, chairman of the local board of motion picture censors, stated tonight that films in which Mabel Normand appears will be barred permanently from local screens as a result of the connection of her name with the shooting Tuesday night of Courtland S. Dines.

The chairman said he had conferred with other members of the board and that the censors were agreed that the Normand films would "have a disastrous effect upon the youth of the community."

Exhibition of films in which Edna Purviance appears will be suspended until the Dines case is "cleared up," Dean stated.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 4, 1924

Mabel Getting Over Operation

"As comfortable as any one usually is after having an appendix out."

That was the bulletin from Mabel Normand's sick room yesterday, a few hours after the film star had undergone a long-postponed operation for appendicitis.

"She is getting along very well," said Dr. Guy Cochran, who performed the operation.

"Miss Normand is very active, hates being kept quiet by illness, and more or less is hard to capture. This operation had been planned for about two years, but heretofore Miss Normand had been reluctant to have it done."

Aside from the usual after effects of a major operation, Miss Normand is said to be recovering from the strain and excitement of the episode in Courtland Dines' apartment on New Year's night, when Dines was shot by Horace Greer, Miss Normand's chauffeur.

She is permitted to receive no visitors and will be kept quiet for several days.

* from *New York Times*, January 5, 1924

Ban Is Extended On Normand Films

Manchester, N.H. -- Alphonse Couture, Treasurer of the New Hampshire Motion Picture Theater Owner's Association announced today that the association would bar from this State future pictures featuring Mabel Normand.

Columbus, Ohio, Jan. 4 -- All motion pictures in which Mabel Normand is one of the characters, may be barred from exhibition in Ohio, Vernon M. Riegel, Director of Education, indicated today after receiving an "urgent request" from Attorney General C. C. Crabbe that such action be taken.

In his reply to the Attorney General, Director Riegel after reciting the fact that Jack Johnson and "Fatty" Arbuckle pictures had been barred by the State Censor Department, said:

"I assure you there will be no deviation from our present policy of dealing with such pictures."

In his letter the Attorney General said:

"This film star has been entirely too closely connected with disgraceful shooting affairs and her name brought into such disrepute as to warrant this suggestion." The barring of the Normand films, he said, would be "to the best interests of society and of the legitimate picture industry."

Topeka, Jan. 4 -- Carrying out the promise he made yesterday Attorney General Griffith has asked the Kansas Motion Picture Censor Board to bar all films in which Mabel Normand appears. The Attorney General, in a letter to the board, stated that his action was taken as a result of the shooting of Courtland S. Dines at Los Angeles by Miss Normand's chauffeur and also mention of her name in connection with the murder of William Desmond Taylor at Los Angeles two years ago.

Memphis, Jan. 4 -- Supplementing his statement of yesterday John M. Dean, Chairman of the Memphis Board of Motion Picture Censors, stated today that films in which Mabel Normand appeared would be barred here permanently as a result of the connection of her name with the shooting Tuesday night of Courtland S. Dines.

The ban, Mr. Dean said, would be ordered at the next regular meeting of the board. The Chairman said other members agreed that the Normand films would "have a disastrous effect upon the youth of the community."

Exhibition of films in which Edna Purviance appears will be suspended until the Dines case is "cleared up," Mr. Dean added.

Sacramento, Jan. 4 -- The manager of a motion picture theater here announced today that he had canceled a film in which Miss Mabel Normand plays a lead because of the shooting of Courtland S. Dines by Miss Normand's chauffeur.

Owners Here Take No Action

William Brandt of the Motion Picture Theatre Owners of the State of New York, when asked whether any action would be taken by his organization regarding pictures in which Mabel Normand figures said:

"I do not think we are going to take any action, as we don't feel that we have any right to sit as judge and jury on an occurrence in California. It would be different matter if a criminal action were contemplated against any player and he was eventually found guilty in court."

Senator Cobb did not believe that any Mabel Normand pictures were being shown in this state, at least not in any important theaters.

E. M. Ascher, who has offices in the Capitol Theatre Building and who is Mack Sennett's representative in the East, Mr. Sennett being Mabel Normand's employer, said that they had not had a single cancellation of a contract of "Molly O," the last picture in which Mabel Normand appeared and which has been generally released. Her most recent production has just been released in Chicago where it is in its second week. It is called "The Extra Girl."

Mr. Ascher said that Mabel Normand had about one year to run on her contract, and that her salary when working on a picture was \$5,000 a week.

At the office of Will Hays, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, it was not thought that any action would be taken.

* from *New York Times*, January 5, 1924

Miss Normand Asks Public For Fair Play

Los Angeles -- Mabel Normand, in her room in the Good Samaritan Hospital, late tonight sent out a statement to the press and an appeal to Boards of Censorship and the public to suspend judgment until she has an opportunity to prove that she is blameless in the affair which led to the shooting in her presence of Courtland S. Dines by Horace Greer, her chauffeur. The statement was made verbally to her attorney, Milton M. Cohen and written by him. The statement follows in part:

"I feel that I am particularly unfortunate in reaping most of the publicity in this terrible tragedy. I am absolutely blameless in the matter, and it is unjust of the censors or any one else to condemn me before they have heard my story.

"I was packing the trimmings on the Christmas tree in my home New Year's Day when Edna Purviance, my friend, called me up and invited me to the apartment of Courtland Dines. I went to the apartment and was there but forty-five minutes, when my chauffeur entered and began shooting. Nobody was more shocked than I at the sound of the shots. I couldn't conceive for the moment what had happened. I rushed out, and Dines said, 'I'm plugged.'"

"I cannot conceive, either, why my chauffeur should have taken the revolver nor why he should have had the audacity to enter my bedroom and take it. No one ever asked him to do it. I called for him to come only that he might bring Mr. Dines his Christmas present, a pair of military hair brushes. I did not believe he had any attachment for me.

"I believe he got the gun after I telephoned, as he says, but I didn't know he had it until he fired those shots, and I don't know why he fired. I didn't recognize the gun, even then, as my automatic.

"There was nothing in any way wrong at the apartment. There was nothing like a party such as seems to be the impression. We were just three friends, having a quiet little visit with each other, just as any other three might do, when Joseph came in and started shooting.

"And because he fired those three shots it seems that every censor in the country wants to ban my pictures. Because this man, whom I had every reason to believe was just an ordinary chauffeur -- he came highly recommended -- because this man, I say, went out of his head, I have to pay the penalty!

"I appeal to the sense of justice and fair play of the American people. All I ask is the chance to show that I am innocent of any wrong doing.

"Mr. Greer will be given his preliminary hearing shortly, I understand, and if I am able to appear in court at that time I shall do so. And until such time as the truth comes out in court I ask not only the censors but also the public to withhold their judgment of me.

"The law presumes everybody innocent until proven guilty. Why should I not have the benefit of that presumption? And of what am I guilty?"

Greer would have killed Miss Normand and then himself had the pistol not jammed, Dr. E. H. Williams is convinced. Dr. Williams made this statement today after he had made an examination of the prisoner at the city jail. Dr. Williams is a member of the Los Angeles County Psychopathic Board and a former member of the staff at Matteawan Prison, N. Y.

"Greer had a deep spiritual love for Miss Normand," said the physician.

Greer was arraigned today before Justice Hanby and the hearing set for Jan. 11. His bonds were placed at \$10,000 and he was removed to the County Jail.

* from *New York Times*, January 7, 1924

Hartford Bars Normand Films

Hartford -- Moving pictures in which Mabel Normand appears will not be shown in Hartford. Local theatre owners agree it is for the betterment of the motion picture industry that such films be barred and a meeting of the State Association of Motion Picture Managers has been called at New Haven for next Tuesday, at which State-wide action on similar lines will probably be taken.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, January 7, 1923

Those "holier than thou" persons who look askance at the picture people should get a little inside information as to the charity interests which certain film folk support generously. Mabel Normand herself is the last one in the world to tell you of her charitable interests. But the organizations she helps, especially those who need it at Christmas time, blow the horn for her, and there are many unfortunates in the industry who owe much to her unpublished kindness.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 1924

Greer Summons Refused

Detectives failed in their attempt yesterday to serve subpoenas upon Mabel Normand and Courtland S. Dines, principals in the shooting of Dines by Mabel Normand's chauffeur on New Year's night.

Dines and Miss Normand are still patients at the Good Samaritan Hospital, where Dines is recovering from an operation. Though the conditions of both are improving rapidly, Detective Lieutenant Jarvis was barred from seeing them yesterday. In his pockets he carried summonses for them to appear in Judge Hanby's court next Friday for the preliminary hearing of Horace A. Greer, on a charge of assault with intent to kill.

Dr. Guy Cochran's reason for preventing the serving of the summons was that both patients are yet very sick and will not be able to appear at the preliminary hearing. He was instructed by District Attorney Keyes to present his reasons in writing to Judge Hanby.

Although Greer's preliminary hearing is scheduled for next Friday, it was said yesterday that it probably will be postponed to a later date to permit Dines and Miss Normand to appear. Subpoenas were served on Mrs. Edith Burns, Miss Normand's confidential friend, and Edna Purviance, a witness of the shooting, yesterday. These four witnesses will constitute the State's case against Greer.

Self-defense will be Greer's plea when he appears at his preliminary hearing, according to his attorney, Clarence B. Conlin. This announcement was accepted with some surprise yesterday by those familiar with the case, as it was believed that Greer's defense would be one of insanity.

"Greer fired at Dines to prevent himself from being stricken down by a bottle in the hands of Dines," said Attorney Conlin. "He was sent to Dines' apartment to escort his employer home, but he did not fire the weapon nor make any remarks until he was forced to do it to save his own life."

Though a property bail of \$10,000 has been raised by J. H. McDonnel, Greer's former employer and owner of a string of taxicabs,²⁰⁹ the accused chauffeur failed to gain his liberty yesterday. He is being held pending the discharge of Dines from the hospital. When Dines is permitted to leave the hospital, Attorney Conlin stated, an attempt will be made to have his client's bail reduced to \$2500 cash or \$5000 in property.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, January 9, 1924

Kansas Governor Hits Normand Picture Bar

Governor J. M. Davis does not believe the Kansas Motion Picture Board of Censorship should undertake to "censor the conduct of all actors and actresses who appear in motion pictures." His policy along this line was outlined

²⁰⁹ All one-time cab drivers should be so lucky in their former employers. This raises the question, was Greer possibly in the pay of someone else when he was working for Mabel? See Truman B. Handy's article "Will Hays Battles Kid Vice," *Movie Weekly*, June 24, 1922, contained in this volume, on the subject of agents and operatives planted in movie stars' households to keep an eye on them.

in a letter addressed today to Mrs. Gertrude A. Sawtell, of the State Board of Review, which censors all films shown in Kansas.

The Governor directly indicated he does not approve of censorship of pictures in which Mabel Normand appears. In this he takes a view opposite to that of Atty. Gen. C. B. Griffith, who recently wrote the board urging that Normand films be eliminated.

Mr. Griffith today stated he has received no reply from the Board of Review. Furthermore, the Governor said, he believed, such action would only tend to advertise the pictures thus censored.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 9, 1924

Stars Breaks Under Strain At Hospital

Mabel Normand has suffered a severe relapse. Her condition was regarded as serious at the Good Samaritan Hospital yesterday.

Breaking under the mental and physical strain following the New Year's shooting of Courtland S. Dines, wealthy clubman, by her chauffeur, Horace A. Greer, Miss Normand was denied to all visitors.

Anxiety was expressed over the sudden change for the worse in the screen star's condition.

Attending physicians called in consultation following a restless night, during which their patient had spells of severe pain and delirium, decided that no one could be permitted to see Miss Normand.

Even Milton Cohen, attorney for the motion picture actress, who had an appointment to consult with her, was forced to postpone his conference.

While admitting the serious turn in Miss Normand's condition, her physicians said, they were, not alarmed. Worry, they contended, was the cause of the relapse.

The disquieting news from the screen star's room at the Good Samaritan Hospital was the principal development of the day in the Dines shooting case. Continued improvement was reported in the condition of the victim of Horace Greer's bullets.

Waiting on the recovery of Dines and Miss Normand, officials marked time yesterday. Indications were that the preliminary hearing, now set for January 11, probably will have to be postponed until January 18, in view of Mabel's relapse.

Clarence B. Conlin, attorney for Greer, said he practically had concluded arrangements for bail, but would hold up application until it was certain Dines would recover.

Greer, it is believed, will plead self defense, when he is called upon to answer for the shooting of the wealthy companion of his mistress and Edna Purviance.

As soon as Miss Normand and Dines are out of danger they will be served subpoenas calling upon them to be present at the preliminary hearing. Physicians have refused to permit detectives to make service of these papers and yesterday Justice Hanby received a letter from Dr. Guy Cochran stating that both the actress and Dines were in a "highly nervous condition" and requesting that attending doctors be consulted before further action is taken.

Judge Hanby has taken this matter under advisement until the case is officially before him on Friday.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, January 9, 1924

Mabel Normand Is Worse Again

Mabel Normand's physical condition was reported as more serious last night than at any other time since she underwent an operation at the Good Samaritan Hospital several days ago.

"She wept continually through the night. Today, she was subject to several seizures of hysteria. For a while, at least, she must be denied the privilege of seeing even her closest friends."

This was the message that came from Miss Normand's hospital room late yesterday afternoon. Until her attorney, Milton S. Cohen, appeared at the hospital for his daily conference with his client the seriousness of Miss Normand's condition was not known to her friends. Attorney Cohen was denied permission to interview her and the only outside word that succeeded in reaching her was in the form of a long and friendly letter from her producer, Mack Sennett.

Continued efforts of many eastern organizations to prevent the exhibition of motion pictures featuring Miss Normand were believed to be the cause of the actress' relapse. From her hospital cot, through Attorney Cohen, she has been conducting a campaign to offset the censorship ban of her motion-picture productions.

Miss Purviance is also reported to be experiencing a certain amount of worry over the shooting of Courtland S. Dines, Denver clubman, by Miss Normand's chauffeur -- so much so that she has retained W. G. Van Pelt as her attorney to represent her at the preliminary hearing of Horace A. Greer, the chauffeur charged with the shooting of Dines.

Greer, at a late hour yesterday, was yet a prisoner in the County Jail. His attorney stated that he will not be released on bail until Dines is discharged from the hospital. That the preliminary hearing will not take place next Friday, the scheduled date, was a certainty yesterday when Dr. Guy Cochran, physician for Miss Normand and Dines, sent a notice to Justice Hanby, stating that his two patients will be unable to appear in court on that date.

The notice was as follows:

"This is to certify that neither Mabel Normand nor Courtland Dines will be able to appear in your court on the 11th. Both are so nervously upset that I would appreciate it if I be consulted before service of subpoenas."

Justice Hanby said no action will be taken in the matter by him until Friday.

Motion pictures featuring Miss Normand were barred in two theaters of Gary, Ind. yesterday. A dispatch from that city stated that the Casino and Granada Theaters would withhold showing any of her productions until after the investigation of the shooting of Dines is completed.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 10, 1924

Fear Laid To Greer In Dines Case

Horace A. Greer, chauffeur for Mabel Normand, had reason to fear Courtland S. Dines, wealthy oil operator and clubman.

Warned by friends that Dines was "hard-boiled" and had beaten one of Mabel's former chauffeurs, the trembling youth feared for his life when he departed upon his mission of fancied chivalry.

This was the substance of the reports yesterday told to Clarence B. Conlin, Greer's attorney.

Similar warnings are said to have been made to Greer by William M. Edwards, taxi driver, and Greer's former roommate.

Greer himself, spending what is believed to be his last day at the County jail, was extremely reticent in commenting on reports.

Even in the county jail Greer has not dropped his mantle of chivalry toward Miss Normand. While passing through corridors of cell blocks yesterday the frail chauffeur was met with uncomplimentary remarks from other prisoners.

Greer paled and dug his finger nails into the palms of his clenched fists. He turned upon the bantering prisoners, who leered mockingly at him behind barred doors.

"See here, fellows," Greer shouted. "We're all in jail together. There's no need of starting any trouble or making it hard for a fellow. Keep that girl's name off your lips!"

Dr. Guy Cochran, who is attending both Miss Normand and Dines at the Good Samaritan Hospital, yesterday declared the film star's condition to be greatly improved after having passed a satisfactory night. Her condition, however, is still serious, he reported.

Dines is said to be making good progress and well on the way to recovery, the physician stated.

It is expected that Attorney Donlin will apply for Greer's release on bail today.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 1924

Normand Films on Blacklist in Buckeye State

One more western State placed Mabel Normand on its blacklist yesterday, and another is considering it.

In Ohio, all motion pictures in which Miss Normand appears will in the future be barred from that State, according to a statement made public by Vernon M. Riegel, State Director of Education, and under whose supervision the Ohio board of film censors operates. All motion picture theaters in Ohio have been notified of the ban and have been instructed to refuse to exhibit Mabel Normand productions. Edna Purviance also was made a party to the Ohio ban, the State board ruling that exhibition of her motion-picture productions will not be permitted in Ohio.

Though Massachusetts has not yet placed an official ban on Miss Normand's pictures, a recommendation that such action be taken immediately was placed before the members of the Massachusetts branch of the Motion-Picture Theater Owners of America.

An Associated Press dispatch from Detroit last night said a temporary ban on all films featuring Miss Normand was decided upon yesterday by the board of directors of the Motion Picture Theater Owners of Michigan. No action was taken regarding the showing of Edna Purviance pictures. While the action of the Michigan directors is not compulsory, it was pointed out that the motion-picture theater owner members usually abide by the decisions of the board.

* from *Ogdensburg Advance and St. Lawrence Weekly Democrat*, Thursday, January 10, 1924

Mabel Normand, the screen actress and heroine of two shooting scares "is the sweetest girl in the world when she is sober," says her chauffeur who did the last shooting. Dear Mabel may be very "sweet" but her actions are not such as to make the public believe it. The quicker she is removed from filmdom, the better it will be for those who advocate no censorship.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 13, 1924

Mabel Again Takes Turn For Worse

Mabel Normand was reported to have suffered another severe relapse at the Good Samaritan Hospital yesterday. Although hospital attaches declared the film star was "resting well," it was stated her condition was far from satisfactory.

Linked with reports of Miss Normand's sudden relapse are statements from the sick chamber that the stricken star has persisted in reading an avalanche of uncomplimentary letters that have poured into the hospital since she underwent a serious operation ten days ago.

Many of these missives sent anonymously, are said to criticize her conduct in the apartment of Courtland S. Dines, wealthy oil operator and clubman, shot on New Year's Day by Horace A. Greer, Miss Normand's chauffeur.

Although every effort has been made by those in attendance at the film star's bedside to prevent her from seeing the great mass of letters that have piled up in the sick chamber, Miss Normand persisted in personally reading the messages to learn the sense of public opinion following the Dines shooting.

Dines, recovering from three gun-shot wounds, in a room at the far end of the hall on the same floor with Miss Normand, was reported greatly improved.

Speculation was rife regarding the identity of a mysterious "woman in brown" who pays him daily visits.

This woman, smaller and more slender than Edna Purviance, who also was in the Dines apartment when the shooting took place, is known to attaches at the hospital.

Miss Purviance, who frequently visits the hospital, has never made her visits in company with this "mystery woman" it was reported.

The "woman in brown," heavily veiled and wearing a lavish array of brown furs, screens her features behind a broad-brimmed hat and large horned-rimmed glasses.

A new and unexpected development in the maze of complications surrounding the shooting of Dines by Mabel Normand's chauffeur was announced by Milton Cohen, the film star's attorney, to the effect that Mrs. Edith Burns, for several years "companion" in the Normand household, would be re-engaged upon the recovery of Miss Normand.

Mrs. Burns, as told exclusively in *The Examiner*, was summarily dismissed by Miss Normand several days ago after a dramatic scene in the sickroom.

It was Mrs. Burns, reports declare, who told Greer to "look out for Dines" and warned him to "be careful" when he pocketed the film star's automatic pistol before answering a call to Dines' apartment for Miss Normand on the night of the shooting.

"I am going to take Mrs. Burns back again just as soon as I recover and straighten my affairs out," Miss Normand is said to have told her attorney. "Her dismissal is a regrettable incident. It was done while we both were excited and under a great mental strain.

"We are the very best of friends and nothing has happened to cause us to become estranged. It was simply a mistake. Mrs. Burns has been perfectly wonderful to me and will resume her place in my household as soon as I get home again."

* from *Los Angeles Times*, January 14, 1924

Film Star Cheery At Hospital

Optimism radiated last night from the Good Samaritan Hospital ward where Mabel Normand, screen scintillant, is recovering from an operation, and from the convincing voice of Milton M.[sic] Cohen, her attorney, retained to appeal against the threats in several states of a censorship ban against Miss Normand's films.

Miss Normand underwent an operation for appendicitis the second day following the wounding of Courtland S. Dines, wealthy oil man, by her chauffeur, Horace A. Greer, the climax to a party at which Edna Purviance was a guest.

"She has passed a good day and continues to improve," was the hospital report.

Mr. Dines, who suffered a pistol shot through the chest, was reported to be progressing, also, toward recovery.

Mr. Cohen denied a report that Miss Normand was to be removed within a day or so to a cottage at Sunset Beach.

"You can take my word that there is nothing to the report," he said. "Miss Normand may be able to leave the hospital at the end of this week. When she leaves she will return to her home to convalesce."

Neither Miss Normand, nor Mr. Dines is available to visitors as yet, but it was said if their improvement continues this situation may change within a day or two.

* from *New York Times*, January 21, 1924

The Girl and the Lion

Mabel Normand's latest film, "The Extra Girl" was presented last night at the Central Theatre. It is a Mack Sennett comedy poking fun at the much discussed idea of lone girl's going to Hollywood. In the beginning one or two scenes are mildly amusing, but for quite a long spell one sits and thinks that Mabel Normand is a little too old to play the part of a screen struck daughter.

She is supposed to be a girl with a natural aptitude for acting because "her grandfather was an acrobat." As the daughter of Pa and Ma Graham she boards an express at River Bend, Ill., and soon afterward is seen in the bustling thoroughfares of Hollywood. Her ambition to become an actress at \$5,000 a week is somewhat dampened by the fact she is forced to accept a position in the wardrobe room of one concern. She wears a funny hat and dark Pickfordian curls.

After the tedious reel and a half one comes to a really funny sequence. Sue (Mabel Normand) is told to put a lion's skin and head on a very tame mastiff, who is waned to pose as the lion, the latter being unwilling that morning to jump when the director wants him to. Sue becomes confused as to which is the lion and which is the dog, and with admirable nonchalance leads out the lion with a rope around his neck, blissfully unaware that she has a wild animal in tow. The lion surprises everybody, especially when he is released by the "extra" girl. He pokes his snout into telephone booths, looks up the director, and then -- the animal that would not jump an hour before -- springs through transoms and over doors to the terror of the director and actors. All the time the lion is on the screen there is plenty to laugh at. You see men suddenly leaving their posts without a word of warning to their colleagues. They haven't time or energy to mutter a word when they realize the lion is so near.

Dave Giddings (Ralph Graves), the young man to whom Sue has given her flighty heart, finally appears on the scene and after fetching a fire-hose turns a stream of water on the king of beasts, with the result that the animal is persuaded to return to his studio lair.

This lion is the whole show, far more amusing than Miss Normand. There is also one of the "Bathing Girl" comedies to be seen, in which there are some amusing and hilarious incidents. It is called "Picking Peaches," the chief comedian in it being Harry Langdon.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 22, 1924

Miss Normand Tells Court Own Story of Rich Clubman's Shooting

Mabel Normand was the only witness at the morning session of Justice Handy's court yesterday when Horace Greer was arraigned in connection with the shooting of Courtland Dines, Denver clubman, on New Year's Day.

She was called to the stand as soon as the hearing opened. Before beginning her testimony, Justice Hanby warned the spectators that unless there was absolute quiet he would clear the courtroom.

Here is the transcript of Miss Normand's testimony:

THE COURT: State your name, please.

THE WITNESS: May I sit down?

THE COURT: Yes. State your name, please. Just state your name in full.

A. Mabel Normand

Attorney Shelley then took up the direct examination of the film star.

Q. Where do you reside, Miss Normand?

A. 3089 West Seventh street.

Q. What is your occupation?
A. Motion pictures.
Q. Do you know one Horace A. Greer, also known as Joe Kelley?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. Did you know him on the first day of January, of this year?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. Did you know one Courtland Dines on that day?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. Do you know where Mr. Dines lived at that time--325B North Vermont street, in this city?
A. Yes, sir, that is correct.
Q. What time did you first go there?
A. I left my house about--after 5.
Q. And what time did you arrive at Dines' apartment?
A. About--well, from the time it takes from where I live at 3089 West Seventh to South Vermont, where Mr. Dines resides. The exact time of that I cannot recall.
Q. And did you see Kelley or Greer at the time you first arrived at Dines' apartments?
A. He drove me there.
Q. Now, did Greer stay there, or leave after he drove you there?
A. No. He drove me there, and he was undressing my Christmas tree at my house, and I told him to come back and call for me, and also told him that perhaps Miss Purviance might come back to my house with me, so he left with the understanding that he was to come back for me in about an hour and a half; perhaps not that long.
Q. About what time was it you next saw Greer after he drove back to your house?
A. It was about 45 minutes.
Q. And that would make it what o'clock?
A. What?
Q. What time was it?
A. It was still daylight when Joe, Mr. Kelley, drove me over to my house-- over to Mr. Dines' apartments. Then when I again saw him, it was not with the understanding of taking me home, only that he was to bring over a Christmas gift that Mr. Greer insisted upon.
Q. Do you fix the time when you knew Greer--you knew Greer as Kelley at that time, did you?
A. Yes, he was going under the name of Kelley from the Pierce Arrow people.
Q. Was it dark when Greer came back to Dines' apartments?
A. I don't remember.
Q. Do you remember--can you fix the time when he came back there?
A. Yes--
Q. How long was he gone as nearly as you can remember?
A. About--I was there about 45 minutes.
MR. SHELLY: I think it would be better, Your Honor, if we could draw a rough diagram, for the purpose of clearing up the testimony.
MR. HAHN: No objection to that, clarifying the situation.
THE COURT: You will find a blackboard back there.
SHELLY: The place marked "D" is a davenport just outside of the door; the place marked "T" is a table in the center of the room; the place marked "B" is the breakfast table; the place marked "H" is the door into the kitchen; the place marked "E" is the door into the bedroom; "C" is a closet; "J" is the bathroom, "I" is the door into the bathroom. Now, when Greer came back the second time--that is, when he came back the first time and after he drove away from there, where did you first see Greer?
A. The bell rang and Mr. Dines asked who was there, and he said, "Joe." He was sitting at the little breakfast table, as near as I can remember, and Miss Purviance was in the bedroom and I got up.
Q. Where were you sitting at the time?
A. On the davenport and I got up--oh, no, I am making a mistake. Mr. Greer came in and had this package--
Q. Wait a moment. When he said "Joe" did he then open the door or did somebody go to it?
A. I am quite sure that Mr. Dines opened the door.
SHELLY: Tell us what was said and done from that time on.
A. Well, Mr. Greer or Mr. Kelly, as I knew him, Joe, came with this package, which I had already telephoned for, because he was not to call for me for an hour and a half, and you will not allow me to tell that--of course, unfortunately, I am not allowed to tell that--
MR. HAHN: Just a moment, Miss Normand. We move that be stricken out as not responsive that you are not allowed to explain. We will allow everything to be explained legally.
THE COURT: It will be stricken out.
A. I see. Well, he came in with a box, which included some military brushes that Miss Purviance had given him Christmas Day, and there was this talk between them. I got up and went over and spoke to Miss Purviance in the door.
Q. You mean the door "E"?
A. The door where the bedroom was and asked her for her powder puff. She was powdering her face and all that sort of thing, and the next thing I heard were shots. I thought they were firecrackers and I made absolutely no objection to them because I am rather used to firecrackers and all that sort of thing around the studio.
Q. Now, when you got up off the davenport had Joe Greer come into the room?
A. Yes, he was there, and he was speaking with Mr. Dines.
Q. How far had Joe come into the room, when you turned and walked away towards the bedroom?
A. Well, I couldn't say just as near. He was already in conversation with Mr. Dines.
Q. Did Dines close the door when Joe--
A. I don't remember that.
Q. Were you in the living room at the time you heard the shots?

A. No; I was in the room that goes between--in the bedroom and the living room--between the two doors.

Q. From the time that Greer came into the room, how long was it before you got up off the davenport and started into the bedroom?

A. Well, I remember Joe coming in, and about, I had delivered the message over the telephone to give him, the box of brushes, to Mr. Dines. Mr. Dines started to talk to Joe. What their conversation was, I don't know because I got up--

THE COURT: Just a moment. You are volunteering too much, Miss Normand. Will you read the question, Mr. Reporter?

MR. HAHN: We are not objecting to that question.

THE COURT: Well, I am, I don't want to encumber the record.

A. It was not a second.

MR. SHELLEY: Then from the time until the shots were fired, you did not look toward Greer or Dines?

A. No, sir.

Q. When you first looked toward them, what was their position; how far inside the door was Greer?

A. Mr. Greer wasn't there. Mr. Dines was all full of blood and was like this (indicating).

Q. Wait a minute; just go back to when Greer came in, that is what I am asking now. When Greer first came into the room there, how far into the room did he go when you last saw him?

A. Well, he was quite close to Mr. Dines, and handing him the package.

Q. And that was the last you saw of him?

A. That was the last I saw of him.

Q. After the shots were fired, did you look toward where Greer and Dines were?

A. No, because I did not first--it never entered my mind to look.

MR. HAHN: Just a moment. We move that that be stricken out as not responsive.

THE COURT: The last part will be stricken out.

MR. SHELLEY: How soon was it that you saw Greer or Dines after that?

A. I did not see Mr. Greer. I saw Mr. Dines like this (illustrating).

Q. How soon was that after you heard the shots fired?

A. Well, it must have been, just as soon as we took the thing seriously; that is, there must have been something happened--

MR. HAHN: Just a minute. We move that that be stricken out as a conclusion.

THE COURT: Stricken out. State the time if you can.

MR. SHELLEY: Within a few seconds or minutes, or how long?

A. Seconds.

Q. Where was Dines after you saw him after the shots were fired?

A. He was sort of staggering.

Q. Where?

A. Near the window.

Q. Which window, will you illustrate.

A. The back part of his apartment. I mean by that that there is a front and a back.

Q. Was he near the table, the dishes, the breakfast table?

A. Well, I think so.

Q. This is entrance, you know (indicating on diagram); there is the bedroom.

A. Yes, I know. He was near that.

Q. Back toward the kitchen?

A. No, because he was coming sort of toward us, and he said, I have this--

MR. HAHN: Just a minute. We object upon the ground it is hearsay, what he said, in the absence of the defendant.

MR. SHELLEY: Greer wasn't there at that time, I take it?

A. No, he was not. I didn't see Mr. Greer.

Q. Was he close or not, do you remember, to the outside door?

A. He was close, but it was locked or half opened.

Q. During your visit, just before and up to the time that you heard the shots fired, was there anyone else in that apartment except you and Dines?

A. Mr. Dines.

Q. When you saw Greer immediately after the shots were fired, what was his condition?

A. I did not see Mr. Greer after the shots were fired.

Q. Mr. Dines?

A. Mr. Dines was leaning over like this (illustrating) holding himself like this and all full of blood.

Q. And what part of his body was he holding?

A. Up here, on the top part (indicating).

Q. Had his hands up to his breast?

A. Yes.

Q. I will show you a small automatic pistol, and ask you if you ever saw that before.

A. I have seen it, yes. I have had it for six years.

MR. SHELLEY: You recognize the pistol then, do you?

A. I don't know.

Q. Well, I mean did you have one similar to that?

MR. CONLIN: Object to that as incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial.

A. I told you I can't remember. All I am telling you--

MR. HAHN: Wait a minute, madam. Please don't volunteer an answer.

MR. SHELLEY: We ask that this be marked plaintiff's exhibit A.

MR. CONLIN: Objected to as for identification.

THE COURT: It may be marked for identification.

MR. SHELLEY: Did you have an automatic pistol similar in appearance to that, previous to the time that you were in Dines' apartment?

A. Yes, for years--for six years.

Q. Where was it the last time you saw that automatic pistol that you had previous to the time that you were at Dines' apartments?

A. A little stand near my bed, a little stand; a little night stand that has a lamp, you know.

Q. Do you remember how long before you were at Dines' apartments or the last time you saw that gun?

A. I haven't seen it or taken notice of it for months and months.

Q. Well, as far as you know it was there on that day?

MR. HAHN: Wait a minute. Objected to on the ground--wait a minute, Miss Normand. We object to that on the ground it is leading and suggestive.

THE COURT: Objection sustained.

MR. SHELLEY: How long previous to this time had you known Mr. Dines?

A. I have known him ever since Miss Purviance introduced me to him, which was about, perhaps a year ago.

Q. How long had you known Miss Purviance?

MR. HAHN: We will object to that on the ground it is incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial, and nothing to do with this case as to how long she knew Miss Purviance.

THE COURT: Overruled. You may answer.

A. I have known Miss Purviance for years.

Q. How long had you known Greer.

A. The day after my birthday, which was November 10, and on the 11th I engaged him. That was the first time I met Mr. Greer.

Q. That was 1923?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did you have any conversation with Greer when he first drove you to the apartment?

A. None whatsoever, except to call for me later.

Q. What was that conversation?

A. It was this, to undress my Christmas tree, which he was doing when I was leaving, and when I left him at Mr. Dines' apartment--why "I have a long way to walk up," I said, "perhaps I will bring Miss Purviance back with me. I don't know what they're going to do tonight--Miss Purviance--because I was going to be alone tonight."

Q. That was what you said to Greer, was it?

A. I think so.

Q. Now, did you say anything to him about when he was to come back?

A. No, I did not.

MR. SHELLEY: I show you a box containing some brushes and a comb, and ask if you ever saw them before, as far as you know.

A. Yes. I believe I did Christmas day but I paid no attention to it.

Q. When Greer came to the apartments what size of bundle did he have with him?

A. A small box like that, wrapped in white paper with the name on it or something like that.

Q. Did you look at the name?

A. I could recognize it if you would show it to me.

Q. I mean, did you at the time?

A. No, indeed I did not.

MR. HAHN: I move that answer to the last question be stricken out. If she did not see the name on the package, it is a dead moral certainty that she don't know that it was there.

THE COURT: Strike it out.

MR. SHELLEY: I show you a piece of white wrapping paper with some writing on it and ask you if you are familiar with that writing?

A. Yes. That is Mrs. Burns' writing. That is paper from my house.

Q. Mrs. Edith Burns?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And she was at that time your housekeeper and companion?

A. No, not exactly. She was just one who would come over and stay at my house. She had no other place to go and she would stay. I have my housekeeper and my maid and everything else that are all with me.

Q. Is this piece of paper that was around the package that Greer had at the time he came back similar in appearance to the paper I have just shown you?

A. Yes, sir. It seems to be the same piece of paper. It seems to be the same piece that was around that box.

Q. Previous to the time you went to Dines' apartments that afternoon had you seen Mrs. Edith Burns?

A. Yes. She was in my house all day.

Q. She was at your house when you left, then?

A. Yes, all day. She had slept there the night previous, New Year's Eve.

Q. Between the time you first went to Dines' apartments and the time you heard the shots fired, did you or Dines talk over the telephone from Dines' apartments?

A. Yes, sir, we did.

Q. Who talked first?

A. I did, because when I arrived--

Q. Did you ring up some one, or did some one ring you up?

A. No, I telephoned.

Q. During that time did any one else talk over the phone from the Dines apartment?

A. Yes, Mr. Dines did, and finished the conversation with Mrs. Burns which I did not hear.

Attorney Hahn then took up the cross-examination of Miss Normand. His first question was: Miss Normand, directing your attention to this map, or diagram, rather, we understood you to testify on direct examination that Mr. Dines was about here; indicated by the letter B; is that right?

A. What does the letter B mean? Is that the bed?

THE COURT: The breakfast room.

MR. HAHN: No, it does not mean the breakfast room.

A. There is no breakfast room in the house.

MR. SHELLEY: The letter B is the breakfast table.

MR. HAHN: The breakfast table was at the back end of the room, is that right, going towards the kitchen?

A. Going towards the kitchen.

Q. Going towards the kitchen?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. We have here a diagram that to go to the kitchen you have to go around a wall and come around here to the letter E, which is the entrance into the kitchen?

MR. SHELLEY: The letter E is the bedroom.

MR. HAHN: Where is the kitchen entrance?

A. There is the breakfast table, and there is a swinging door that leads right into the kitchen.

Q. A swinging door goes through this wall?

A. I don't know. It could not go through the wall.

Q. How do you go into the kitchen; by going around a wall?

A. Right next to it.

Q. Right next to it?

A. Yes, sir, it is right next to it.

Q. From the position you have indicated here, so far as you can remember, could you see Greer and Dines from the position where you were standing?

A. No, I did not.

Q. That is good. You did not see them at all, what transpired between the two parties?

A. No, I did not.

Q. You did not see what Mr. Dines had in his hands all the time, did you?

A. No, sir.

Q. You did not pay any attention?

A. I did not see it.

Q. You were busy with Mr. Dines [sic], is that right?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And that was your purpose in going into the bedroom, was to go and see Mr. Dines [sic]?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And you really don't know how long they did argue there, do you?

A. No, I don't.

Q. It is your impression that it was a few seconds, is that right?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. But you could not, under oath, say how long it did take to argue between them?

A. No, sir.

Q. And you could not say what Mr. Dines did say to Greer, and Mr. Greer say to Mr. Dines?

A. No, sir.

Q. And you don't know whether Mr. Dines threw a bottle at him, or not?

A. No, sir.

MR HAHN: Thank you, that is all.

On redirect examination Mr. Shelley asked: Miss Normand, calling your attention to exhibit C, in the center of the living room there, at the time that you left the davenport and walked to the bedroom, when Greer had just come in the room, did you notice what was on that table C, or had you noticed before that time?

A. No, sir, I did not.

Q. Did you notice whether or not there was a large bottle on that table?

MR. HAHN: I object to that as leading and suggestive. She said she did not remember.

THE COURT: Objection sustained.

MR. SHELLEY: Now, if the court please, a witness may say that they did not notice particularly what was on a table, and still they may know that it is not a hobby horse on that table, or something that is a noticeable object there, so I think I may ask this witness the question I asked, did she notice whether or not there was a bottle on that table.

MR. HAHN: Miss Normand is an intelligent witness.

MR. SHELLEY: And Mr. Hahn is an intelligent attorney, and there are some other intelligent people sitting in the court room. I insist, your Honor, I have a right to ask her whether or not she noticed a large bottle on that table.

MR. HAHN: We also insist that it is leading and suggestive and we are willing to abide by the court's decision.

MR. SHELLEY: Counsel for the defense has brought out the point, you did not notice Dines throw a bottle at Greer. Now we, the People, certainly have the right to ask this witness whether or not there was such an object as that in plain view on the table, before this witness.

MR. CONLIN: He may have had it in his pocket.

THE COURT: I think it would be proper for you to ask this witness if there was a bottle of any kind in that room.

MR. HAHN: But she testified that she did not see anything on that table.

MR. SHELLEY: My question was did she notice anything particularly.

THE COURT: I will sustain the objection to the question as asked.

MR. SHELLEY: As I understand, then, the ruling of your honor, refuses to let me ask the witness whether she noticed a bottle on the table?

THE COURT: No; you can't ask her if she noticed a bottle there in that room. I think that would be a proper question, inasmuch as the bottle has been brought out here, but to call her attention to any particular place after she said she didn't remember anything of that bottle, or words to that effect, wouldn't be proper.

MR. SHELLEY: At any time after Greer came back the second time and Dines went to the door, did you see Dines with a bottle in his hand?

A. No, sir.

MR. SHELLEY: During the time that Greer and Dines were there, and when Greer came back the second time, did you see in the living room any bottle?

A. No; I didn't notice any bottle.

MR. SHELLEY: That is all.

MR. HAHN: Miss Normand, let me ask you one question, with your Honor's permission. As I understood from cross examination that you didn't pay any attention as to whether there were any bottles around there?

A. I did not.

Q. And you could not say that there were not bottles?

A. No, sir, I cannot.

Q. And as I understood you, you don't know whether Mr. Dines threw a bottle at Greer or not?

A. No, sir; I never saw that part.

MR. HAHN: You never saw that part. Thank you very much. That is all.

MR. SHELLEY: Was there anything on the table at that time? That is, the table in the center of the room?

A. No, the table is on the side of the room.

Q. Now, on that table in the center of the room, the table T, was there at the time that Greer came back anything that you remember on that table?

A. No, there were a lot of little cigarette ends, which were all over the place, but on the table I saw nothing, and then I don't remember--

Q. On the table B, in the kitchen, at the time that Greer came back the second time, do you remember what was on that table?

A. I do not.

MR. SHELLEY: That is all.

MR. HAHN: That is all.

THE COURT: Miss Normand, did you see Mr. Greer enter the room at all that evening just before the shots were fired?

A. No, sir, I don't remember.

Q. Did you see him there at the door?

A. No, your honor, because the door bell rang and I heard Mr. Dines say, "Just a minute."

Q. You didn't see Mr. Greer at all then immediately after the shots?

A. No, sir--no, sir, I didn't, your honor. I just can't recall.

Q. Did you see him?

A. After that I just can't recall, but--

Q. Did you see him?

A. Because they were all talking about everything New Year's, you know.

Q. Who do you mean by "all"?

A. Mr. Dines, Miss Purviance, just before she had entered the other room, they were all talking about people and New Year's Eve.

Q. Mr. Dines went back to the breakfast table, and you went to him.

A. No. When the door bell rang he was standing, it seemed to me, so far as I can recall, near the breakfast table.

Q. And you were where?

A. I was sitting on that couch. The door bell rang. Mr. Dines said, "Joe, who is it?" and Joe answered--

MR. CONLIN: Just a minute, object to that as a conclusion of the witness and incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial unless she is qualified to know his voice.

THE COURT: All right. What was said by the party at the door?

A. Not a thing.

THE COURT: "Joe"?

A. Yes, Mr. Greer.

MR. CONLIN: Object to that and move that the answer be stricken as not responsive.

THE COURT: Stricken out. Did you recognize the voice of the person who said, "Joe"?

A. Well, I think I ought to be rather used to it.

Q. Did you recognize who was there?

A. Well, I think I did.

Q. And who was there?

A. Joe.

Q. That is the defendant here?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. But you didn't see him at all?

A. No, I didn't.

Q. All right. Just at what point did you leave the room, or did you leave the room first?

A. No, Mr. Dines went to the door. Mr. Greer had a box.

Q. No, whoever it was, did you see him with the box?

A. Yes, I did. I saw him with the box. I mean--I don't know whether I saw him with the box or not. Anyway, I got up and went over and spoke to Mr. Dines, who was in the room.

Q. Now, we want to know did you see him, or did you not see the defendant? That is what I want to know.

A. Yes, I did. I saw Joe in there.
Q. Where was he? That is all right. Now where was he?
A. Entering the door with the box like this (illustrating).
Q. And where, at that time, was Mr. Dines?
A. Near the table. Mr. Dines at that time was at the table.
Q. All right, take the chalk and show us now; make a mark where each one of them was?
A. I can't draw a picture, your honor.
A. You can make a cross?
A. I can make it where it is.
Q. Where the figure A is, is the door, supposed to be the entrance to the building?
A. Well, this place (indicating on diagram).
Q. All right, show us where Mr. Greer was when you saw him with the box?
A. He was there (indicating on diagram).
Q. All right. Now, show us where Mr. Dines was at the same time?
A. Now, what does D mean?
Q. That is where you were sitting; that is the couch.
A. All right, that is fine. T for Tommy is what?
Q. That is the table.
A. And B is the little breakfast table (indicating on diagram).
Q. Well, now let us know where you saw him?
A. Well, as near as I can recollect, I am sure he was near there, because I--
Q. All right, never mind why.
A. I got up, and I went--where is the bedroom?
Q. Where you see the D there is the door.
A. I went that way (indicating on diagram).
Q. All right. Now, about how far is it from where you saw Mr. Greer, to where you saw him at that time?
A. From here to where that gentleman is sitting, your honor.
THE COURT: How far is that, counsel?
MR. CONLIN: About twelve feet.
MR. HAHN: About twelve or fifteen feet.
THE COURT: Is that stipulated?
MR. SHELLEY: Ten to fifteen feet.
MR. HAHN: Ten to fifteen feet, something like that.
THE COURT: Did you leave the room?
A. Yes, Joe--
Q. You went into the bedroom, then?
A. Into the bedroom.
Q. Where were you when you heard these shots?
A. Still in the doorway.
Q. Just where?
A. Where is the doorway? Because I am getting a little mixed up on that.
Q. Where E is.
A. There is the doorway (indicating on diagram). There is where I was.
Q. (Indicating.) This is the bedroom.
A. All right, that is where Miss Purviance was.
Q. Did you meet her?
A. Yes, I did.
Q. And how far apart were you and Miss Purviance at that time?
A. Well, there is a closet--
Q. Just answer the question. How far apart were you?
A. Well, just like this (illustrating); because that is a long mirror--
Q. Four or five feet?
A. I can't tell the feet. Like this, (illustrating).
THE COURT: How far is that, counsel?
MR. CONLIN: About four feet.
THE COURT: Is that all right, Mr. District Attorney?
MR. HEINECKE: About four feet.
THE COURT: All right.
Q. And you and Miss Purviance were talking?
A. Yes, talking. Back here, I was this way (indicating).
Q. Which way was your back--towards Mr. Greer?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. At the time the shots were fired?
A. Yes, your Honor.
Q. And you went right on talking with Miss Purviance, didn't turn round, for some seconds?
A. I thought they were firecrackers--
Q. Is that correct?
A. Absolutely correct.
Q. But when did--when you did look around, where was Dines?
A. He was near the table.
Q. Show us on the map.
A. Oh! Is that the table (indicating)?

Q. Yes, that is the table.

A. Well, it seems to me--we were so excited when we saw the blood--

Q. Never mind, now.

A. That is the only way I can explain, your Honor.

Q. Don't explain it at all. Show us.

A. It seemed as if he was coming towards us, and we both rushed towards him, and he was all bent over like this (illustrating).

Q. All right; you have told us that. Now, where was Mr. Greer--do you know?

A. I didn't see Mr. Greer.

Q. He had gone?

A. He had already left.

THE COURT: That is all. Any further questions?

MR. CONLIN: Do you know whether Mr. Greer had left the room before these reports like firecrackers went off?

A. No, sir; I do not.

Q. How long prior to the time of these shots did you see Mr. Greer?

A. Well, it all happened so quickly, I can't recall that, or answer it correctly.

Q. Well, do you know whether it was one minute, or two minutes, or three minutes or how long it was?

A. Hearing these reports like firecrackers?

Q. When you came out of the bedroom?

A. Well, I know it was--

Q. You came out of the bedroom?

A. Well, I know it was--I asked Miss Purviance, I had time to ask her for her powder puff.

Q. In other words--did you use the powder puff?

A. No, I asked her for it. She was using it before that long mirror which goes in the closet.

Q. You stood in the doorway until Miss Purviance got through using it?

A. I never used it, because in the meantime the shots were fired.

Q. Well, when you went into the bedroom--or when you were standing in the door?

A. I was standing in the doorway.

Q. You couldn't see what happened in the room, could you, what happened between Mr. Dines and Mr. Greer?

A. I couldn't see.

Q. Well, then, you don't know how long Mr. Dines and Mr. Greer were talking, do you?

A. I do not.

Q. It may have been two or three or four minutes, may it not?

A. It was longer, perhaps.

MR. SHELLEY: Did you, after the shots were fired, when you came back in, or at any time before you left the apartment, see an automatic revolver?

A. No, sir.

MR. HAHN: Just a minute--she has answered, "No, sir," all right. She said, "no."

MR. SHELLEY: That is all.

MR. HEINECKE: Another question, Miss Normand. You stated when you went in there, you saw Mr. Dines and he was standing in this position (illustrating). Now you mean he was bent over and had both hands on his chest?

A. I can't answer that correctly because I know he was this way (illustrating), all full of blood.

Q. Now, you are indicating that he was stooping with his head over?

A. Yes.

Q. And with his hands on his chest?

A. And he said, "I have been plugged"--that is the only way I remember.

MR. HAHN: Wait a minute, madam, wait a minute. Objected to as hearsay, what he said, and no proper foundation laid. It hasn't been shown that Greer was there.

THE WITNESS: No, Mr. Greer wasn't there.

THE COURT: The objection is overruled.

THE WITNESS: Pardon me.

THE COURT: I think that is part of the res gestae--near enough.

Q. Will you indicate, if you can state, will you approximate about how far you were standing from Mr. Greer, when you saw him in the doorway?

A. I wasn't standing; I was sitting, your honor, when Mr. Greer came in, and got up because he had a box in his hands for Mr. Dines, and then I left for the bedroom door to speak to Miss Purviance and ask for her powder box.

Q. What I want to fix is the distance between the point where Mr. Greer spoke, and when you went to the door to see Miss Purviance. The question is how far it would be from the point where Mr. Greer stopped, to where you were talking to Miss Purviance, at the door of the bedroom?

A. Here is your door (indicating on diagram), and about that man's shoes there (indicating), about that far is where Mr. Dines was.

Q. Which man?

A. I don't know that man.

MR. SHELLEY: Eight or nine feet?

MR. HAHN: Eight or nine feet.

THE COURT: All right.

MR. HEINECKE: What did you and Miss Purviance do immediately after you saw his condition?

MR. CONLIN: Objected to as incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial, leading and suggestive, assuming a state of facts not in evidence.

MR. HEINECKE: If anything.

MR. CONLIN: No bearing on this defendant.

THE COURT: Overruled.

MR. HAHN: If your honor please, Miss Purviance and Miss Normand's actions, what they did in the absence of the defendant are prejudicial to the defendant. I don't know what she may state. It has nothing to do with the issues in this case. The question is very broad. You might as well ask her what she did at midnight.

THE COURT: The question is what she immediately did. I don't think it is prejudicial at all. I shall not allow the witness to go into any detailed statement of what happened for any extended period afterwards, but what happened immediately, I think is material.

MR. HAHN: Whether the defendant was there or not?

THE COURT: Yes, you may answer.

Q. What did you do immediately after?

A. Why, we rushed out of the room and saw Mr. Dines in this condition. We both, Miss Purviance and I, took his arms on each side, and took him into the bedroom and put him on the bed.

THE COURT: I think that answers it.

MR. HAHN: Just a minute.

THE COURT: And put him on the bed?

A. On the bed.

MR. HEINECKE: That is all.

Attorney Hahn, on re-cross examination, asked: You don't remember what you did immediately after the shooting, do you?

A. Yes. I do. I remember I turned around after I heard what I thought were firecrackers and saw Mr. Dines in this condition.

Q. Why, you said a few minutes ago it was probably four or five minutes?

A. Well, we were talking, and I didn't pay much attention to it, but as soon as we did see the condition that Mr. Dines was in, we both ran to him, and Miss Purviance took him on one side and I took him on the other side and we took him into the bedroom.

THE COURT: You heard no conversation between Dines and Greer either before or after the shooting?

A. No, your honor.

MR. HAHN: You really don't remember whether it was four or five minutes or four or five seconds that you walked out of that bedroom with Miss Purviance, do you.

A. No, I don't.

MR. CONLIN: This four or five minutes that you testified having elapsed, do you mean that it was four or five minutes between the time that Mr. Greer came into the apartment and was talking with Mr. Dines four or five minutes, or was it four or five minutes from the time the firecrackers went off and you turned around and saw Mr. Dines?

MR. SHELLEY: We will object to that as immaterial.

A. I can't give you the absolute detailed time except I got up from the couch and walked to the bedroom door and stood and talked to Miss Purviance, and the next thing I heard was the shots; the exact time I don't know.

MR. CONLIN: That is all.

* from *Variety*, January 24, 1924

THE EXTRA GIRL

Shown for run at the Central, New York, Jan. 20. Running time, 76 minutes. Released through Associated Exhibitors

Mabel Normand came to town last Sunday in the form of "The Extra Girl." The picture is just another one of the comedy melodramatic type of things that Miss Normand has been appearing in recently. Had it preceded "Hollywood" and "Souls for Sale" it would have been a knockout, but coming as it does after those two "inside stuff" pictures, it doesn't deliver any particular kick. It is a good program feature, and in towns where the exhibitor feels he can get away with it the morbid interest in the star at this time may draw some money.

The story of "The Extra Girl" is by Mack Sennett and the direction by F. Richard Jones. As a matter of fact, the only credit overlooked on the screen titles is that the "stock is by Eastman."

Miss Normand has the role of a "female Merton." Back in the old hometown in Illinois she is in love with a garage mechanic, while her dad wants her to marry the owner of a drug store. Mabel won't have any of the pill pounder, and on the wedding day runs away to Hollywood, with transportation and funds provided through her winning a beauty contest.

That beauty contest thing was a frame, though, for a jealous grass widow back in the home town who wanted to cop the auto surgeon switched the pictures in the envelope that went to the contest editor. So when Mabel gets on the Sennett lot she is given a job as an assistant in the wardrobe department.

That doesn't faze her. She writes home of the glories of "the land of sunshine and flowers" and has dad and mother join her. They bring \$15,000 with them. One of Mabel's obliging friends on the Coast invests it for them, telling them the next day that the company has gone to the wall and there is nothing left for them to do but go back home.

Right here Mabel comes to the fore and tracks the villain to his room and with her little revolver, sticks him up to get the coin back, but he is getting the best of the situation when in bursts the little auto guy, who has been working props around the studio to be near Mabel. Between them they get the coin back.

The picture has a lot of hoke [sic] that will get laughs, and Mabel's camera test is one of these that is certain to get over.

The supporting cast has George Nichols and Anna Hernandez playing Pa and Ma, while Ralph Graves is the hero and Ramsey Wallace the heavy.

Mabel has one bit, that of leading a lion around the studio, that is certain to give the audience a thrill. The only question in the exhibitor's mind should be, Can he or can he not get away with showing a Mabel Normand at this time? If his public will stand for her -- and for the greater part there is no reason why they shouldn't (at least until the trial of the shooting chauffeur proves different) -- he will undoubtedly get some coin with "The Extra Girl." (Fred.)

* from *Moving Picture World*, January 26, 1924

Mabel Normand in "The Extra Girl," in its third week at Aaron Jones's Orpheum, Chicago, continues to pack the house and win the praise of the newspaper critics of the city. In addition to the more than favorable comments of Mae Tinee in the Tribune and Polly Wood in the Herald & Examiner, which already have been printed, other reviewers have commented in part as follows:

Virginia Dale, Chicago Daily Journal: "Because this is something 'different,' because it brings Mabel back, and she has been worth waiting for, and because everyone deserves some fun, "The Extra Girl" is most highly recommended."

The Chicago Evening Post: "Mabel Normand's pictures are few and far between these days, but her audiences never seem to forget her and are there in throngs to greet her again every time she makes her appearance. Mabel is always good for a laugh and a good time -- and that is what people like. There are times in this picture when she has them shouting with laughter."

Robe Reel in Evening American: "Mabel Normand turns the trick in 'The Extra Girl.' In this delightful story she gives additional proof of the fact that she is one of the silver sheet's best little comediennes. There will be many who will say she is the best. There are plenty of gags to make you laugh and many quieter moments to warm the heart; together they make an enjoyable, satisfying film."

Carl Sandburg in the Daily News: "The new Mabel Normand picture, 'The Extra Girl,' has one recommendation to start with, and that is that they took their tie with it. Miss Normand is not one of those who come in a new release every two or three months. In "The Extra Girl" she does her best acting. There are moments in it when she rises to great pantomimic art, and the revelation of a personality that has tone, color, ranges, shadings."

The Denver Post said: "The Extra Girl," the current Princess [Theater] feature, is a howling (literally) success and audiences forget all about being polite. They roar at the absurd clowning of the ultra-comic Mabel Normand and slap each other on the back and behave very much as if they had no manners but were having the time of their lives without them."

* from *Photoplay*, February 1924

Somebody went over to see Mabel Normand the other day. The maid said she was in, but came back in a few moments with a puzzled expression on her face, declaring that Miss Normand had been there just a second ago but had disappeared. The friend joined the search and they found Mabel -- out on the back curbstone, shooting fire crackers. Mabel doesn't care whether it's Fourth of July or not. She adores firecrackers.

[in the same issue]

If for not other reason than that it brings Mabel Normand back, this picture ["The Extra Girl"] is welcome. She is one of the actresses that the screen cannot spare. Few have her freshness, her piquancy, her gift for comedy. She is a fascinating gamin, no matter in what she plays. There is plenty of comedy to "The Extra Girl" and also quite some thrills, including a remarkably good fight.

* from *Photoplay*, February 1924

" Herbert Howe

Mabel Normand is another charmer of child-naturalness who is instantly ensnaring to men. She is an unbelievable combination of gamin and angel. And, curiously, the demon never seems to affect the deity in the least. She is the angel child of the song: When she is good she is very, very good, and when she is bad she is very good company.

I attended a dinner party which Mabel graced. Among the guests was an icy dowager who simply refused to melt. Suddenly Mabel looked across at her and cried, "I'll bite you, baby!" The dowager collapsed.

I don't believe there ever was created a more sincere, unselfish mortal than Mabel Normand. She is that exalted type of feminine charmer who can give a man friendship in lieu of love and still make him feel a triumphant Lothario.

* from *Movie Weekly*, February 2, 1924

Give Mabel Normand A Chance!

By Fulton Oursler

It was little more than a year ago today that Mr. David A. Balch, the editor of Movie Weekly, came into my office and said:

"What shall we do about Wally Reid?"

Wally Reid was in the hospital. The newspapers had published ugly stories that Reid was a dope fiend. The following week Movie Weekly published an editorial captioned with Mr. Balch's question, "What About Wally Reid?" in which this magazine pleaded for fair play and besought the always hasty American public to withhold its judgment on this young man until, with God's help, he should recover and come out of the sick room to answer the charges himself.

He never had that chance. He died. But from all over the United States there came letters to this office endorsing the plea, letters from the great leaders of the film world.

This morning Mr. Balch came to my office again, and the question that he asked instantly asked brought back to my mind the query he had uttered on the day Wally Reid died. Only this time his question was:

"What about Mabel Normand?"

Shall this young woman be convicted before the bar of public opinion without a fair hearing? Shall her livelihood be endangered, her reputation besmirched, her pictures be barred on the strength of the most unreliable testimony ever uttered in the history of the world -- the careless and irresponsible reports of the popular American newspapers?

Already boards of censorship in various states, trembling with virtuous indignation, have pontificated over the young woman. Her pictures have been censored off the screen by these dignitaries, although they know nothing more of the circumstances than what they have read of them in the sensational press.

Admitting at the outset that appearances are against her, we should remember always that appearances are deceiving. But, regardless of appearances, regardless of what the circumstances reported may be, it is the height of unfairness, the height of impudence and the height of intolerance to take swift drastic, and in many case irreparable action against the private fortune and reputation of an individual, without a full and complete understanding of the merits of the case.

No more eloquent example of the abuses of power can be wished for than such autocratic and arbitrary tyranny. I shall never forget one lavender twilight in Chicago. I was at dinner in the Marigold Gardens, when the lady who was with me said:

"There's Fatty Arbuckle."

I had never met Mr. Arbuckle, And I say it with shame, I had asked her to introduce us, and she did. And the conversation I had with Arbuckle was reported in these columns.

At my request, Arbuckle supplied me with all the evidence of his various trials, including the absolute and final vindication of a jury of twelve honest men and women who tried him and found him guiltless of the blood of Virginia Rappe.

And now before the bar of public opinion is marshaled the beautiful and talented Mabel Normand. Shall she, too, be condemned, unheard? The heart of that girl must be filled with dread. I think I should rather face the cowed inquisitors of Spain. I think I should rather go into the den of beasts outside the brazen gates of Babylon. I think I should rather take my chances in the front line trenches, than innocent, come before intolerance and bigotry and pre-judgment.

The crime of hasty judgment is committed day after day in the land whose temples are built to Him who said: "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Our history is stained with illustrious examples. Poor Dewey found out what it is to be a popular hero, and then to make a mistake.

It is conceivable, wholly conceivable, that Mabel Normand and Edna Purviance paid a friendly call upon a man under entirely innocent circumstances and that while they were there a crazy person, a drunkard, a dope fiend, or whatever that unfortunate individual may have been, came in and fired a shot that brought in the police, and there they were.

And now, through no sin of their own, they have become such outcasts from decent society that their pictures cannot be shown. It is unfair, it is unworthy, it is unjust. And as long as Movie Weekly is read by the patrons of the moving picture theaters of America, we will lift our voices in behalf of fair play for those who work and toil in the studios to shed pleasure and romance, beauty and drama, before the lives of people who hunger for something besides the grey monotony that fills their lives.

From another angle, the idea is not only opposed to the constitutional rights of citizens of the free-republic, so-called. It is fundamentally absolute. I said once before in these columns that I had bought for my daughter a very beautiful piano. It is a matter of the utmost indifference to me whether the men who made that piano, the men who strung the scale and inserted the action had set the keys and varnished the case and made it a singer of beautiful melodies beneath the caressing fingers of my little girl -- I say, it is a matter of the utmost indifference to me whether those men who made this instrument beat their wives or sold their souls to the devil. I hope they stopped such practices, but their private sins are of no concern to me when I buy that instrument. Nor are they of concern to anyone else in the United States. When you buy a bar of soap you do not ask whether the factory girl who wrapped it was a virgin.

The moving picture that I see is not Mabel Normand. It is a story. If it is a good story, I like it. And what is Mabel Normand to me or what am I to Mabel Normand? But now, in the hours of her extremity, in the hour of her distress, she stands imminently in danger of being garroted, black-jaded and utterly destroyed in her profession, when she may be, for all I know, and as far as all these pontificating censors know, as innocent as their wives and their mothers and their daughters.

And while we're about it -- what of these censors, and their wives, and their daughters? Are they all of them so impeccable in their conduct as to cloak themselves in a holier-than-thou attitude? Or would their own lives disclose incidents that would not stand the pitiless light of publicity -- a light as fierce and as cruel as that which was shed upon Mabel Normand in her unhappy hour of New Year's festivity? I wonder.

Therefore, Movie Weekly refuses, in this, and all subsequent issues to publish a scandal story about this unfortunate girl. But it throws open its space quite freely to the prosecuting attorney in Los Angeles, to Miss Normand, and to Miss Purviance, that each and all of them may use, without reserve, this allotted space to state their case freely and fairly. And if there is a trial in the courts, Movie Weekly will report the evidence in the trial just as freely and just as fairly. But to the sanctimonious censors who are so eager to destroy a woman's good name before she has had a chance to speak for herself, Movie Weekly will give nothing save the counsel of a little practical Christianity:

"Judge not, that ye be not judged!"

It is just as true today as it was two thousand years ago when it was first spoken.

Gentlemen -- give Mabel Normand a chance!

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 27, 1924

Ohio Will Not Bar Normand Pictures

Motion pictures featuring either Mabel Normand or Edna Purviance, who recently figured in a shooting affray in Los Angeles will not be barred by the Ohio State Censorship Board, according to a decision of that body today. The censorship board at its meeting took the stand that cinema actors are "innocent until proved guilty and that unless new developments put their affair in the Arbuckle class, no action will be taken against motion picture stars."

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 20, 1924

Mabel Not Perturbed Over Snub

"Gee, if anyone ever shoots off a firecracker when I'm around --"

Mabel Normand arrived in Chicago yesterday, and in the course of an interview at the Blackstone which embraced her views on the withdrawal by Illinois club women of an invitation to present her version of the Dines shooting here last New Year's Day, gave vent to the foregoing.

"If they wanted me there for the trial, you don't suppose they'd have let me start to New York like this, do you?" Miss Normand was reported to have inquired of her interviewers. "Edna and I didn't know anything about the shooting, anyway. We were in the other room when it happened."

"Will you do something for me?" Miss Normand demanded before a fusillade of questions was launched at her. "I want you to thank the few lovely women in Chicago who have stood by me."

Despite the action of the Illinois club women in withdrawing their invitation to her, Miss Normand declared she would "love" to address these same women when the Dines case is over, it was stated.

Miss Normand showed no disinclination to talk, answered all questions put to her, and was ingenuous in her discussion of both the snub by the club women and Dines shooting, according to messages received.

A few hours before Miss Normand reached Chicago, Mrs. George Palmer, President of the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs, declared that in her opinion "the majority of Illinois club women wish to see neither the actress in person, nor on the screen."

Mrs. Delevan Cowles, President of the Women's Association of Commerce, who sent Miss Normand the invitation to address the club women, said she "took exception to Mrs. Palmer's assuming to speak for the club women of Illinois."

"I have sent a letter to Miss Normand at her hotel," she said, "explaining that our invitation to her still stands."

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, March 23, 1924

The Illinois State Federation of Women's Clubs officially snubbed our Mabel Normand when she came to town and left early in the week. Immediately following the last shooting fray in which Mabel participated as audience, some of the ladies who love their club and all womenkind notified the poor Hollywood working girl they were with her and would be glad to hear her side of the sad, sad story. They didn't blame her for having a chauffeur.

But when Mabel arrived at the locale, 70,000 State women, banded together by the federation of clubs, united in the policy of ignoring her. Mrs. George Palmer of Springfield, president of the State Federation, came to Chicago Tuesday night to give a definite statement denying that the federation or any of its districts had ever authorized an invitation to Mabel.

The individual members of the first district who had taken upon themselves responsibility for issuing the invitation following Mr. Diane's role as target, pointed out that since the film star has not as yet appeared at the trial in Hollywood, her appearance before them would be "putting the cart before the horse."

Miss Normand was told of a letter addressed to her by Mrs. Delavan Cowles, president of the Women's Association of commerce, which reiterated that association's, invitation for Miss Normand to appear before it "at some future date, after you have had the opportunity to state your case in court." In the letter, Mrs. Cowles severely criticizes Mrs. Palmer.

Mrs. Palmer's statement in part is: "I am of the opinion that the majority of the Illinois club women do not wish to see Miss Normand or her films. We are not anxious to 'knife' a fellow woman, but we do not wish to exalt her and make a martyr of her."

The lady president made plain her desire to "clear up the confusion in Illinois" and put her State "in right" with her sister States, chiefly Wisconsin, bulletined the pithy paragraph that "Chicago women who would bring Miss Normand before their club, postpaid, to tell her own story of the Dines shooting, is a delight to the sensation-loving public. Had Mabel not been mentioned quite generally in regard to the famous Taylor case and the Dines case it is probable she would not have been considered worth her expenses as an exhibit."

* from *Variety*, April 2, 1924

Miss Normand Must Testify

Horace A. Greer, Mabel Normand's chauffeur, pleaded not guilty before Judge Crail to a charge of having shot Courtland S. Dines. The trial has been set for April 17.

District Attorney Keyes will personally prosecute and states he will have Miss Normand here to testify for the state.

* from *Variety*, April 2, 1924

Detroit -- Opposition against Mabel Normand's appearance in pictures or in person has been withdrawn in this state, with the result, "The Extra Girl" with Miss Normand in person will play the Broadway-Strand week of April 13.

Michigan was one of the first states to start the no-Normand rave after the recent publicity explosion which concerned Miss Normand and Miss Purviance.

* from *Variety*, April 16, 1924

The trial of Horace Greer is scheduled to start April 17.

District Attorney Keyes has announced that unless Mabel Normand returns to this city before that date. A postponement will be asked by the prosecution.

Greer's attorney says he is also anxious to have her return to testify for his client, but does not believe she will be back before the middle of next month.

* from *Movie Weekly*, April 19, 1924

Would I Have Been Happier If I Was Married? Asks Mabel Normand

Popular screen star, who has just come East, from Hollywood, questions pathetically the tragedy of the notoriety that seems to shadow her public life

By T. Howard Kelly

It is one thing to win fame and riches as a slender little girl, wearing a curl that strays and strays; to stand upon the silver summits of screen success, basking in the glory of popularity and power, while from below echoes upward the applause of a cheering world. And it is quite another thing for this little girl to find herself pushed down into a lonely night-shadowed valley while from the ranging hills above comes the sound of accusation; of denouncement.

This is the thought I find in Mabel Normand's heart as she looks back a few paces into the past and realizes how very much alone she has faced the world on two occasions when Fate lifted its finger, and leveled accusations against her that threatened to plunge the actress down into the gloom of tragedy which stalked her path. She has come to realize that fame and fortune can be empty and forlorn things when they leave you all by yourself in the hours of crisis that visit the lives of rich and poor, famous and obscure alike.

That is why Mabel of the laugh-provoking screen funnyisms is wistfully wondering today if it would not have been better, after all, to have married as she climbed the steep hillside to success. Perhaps, then she would not have been so pathetically alone when forced to shamble back into the shadows.

"A husband," she mused in that childishly winsome voice of hers, "yes, maybe a husband would have check-mated the march of Fate through my life; for you must remember that everybody attributes my connection with the Taylor and Dines shooting affairs as the working of a Fate which seems to hover over me. At least, a husband could have fought for me against the hostility of a world that seems quick to turn against the person whose name is linked with scandal. And, still, thank heaven for this one thing. I can be sincerely grateful for the apparent refusal of my public to condemn without giving me a chance to defend myself," she declared, her eyes lighted by the glow of gratitude.

Speaking of the Dines' shooting, and how she has had to fight for herself all alone since that tragic New Year's afternoon, the little comedienne pointed out that Charlie Chaplin protected Edna Purviance in a very efficient manner.

"But there was no one to fight for Mabel Normand," she said sadly. Suddenly her slenderness tautened; her eyes blazed. Mabel was once more the courageous girl who has dared to go up and down the long, long trails alone, unaided and unshielded, "I'm not going to be the goat in this case. I'm not going to be led to slaughter. It isn't fair!" she cried.

As long as girls go up against the world, and challenge it for a high place in life's gallery of fame and success, there will always be an interested audience waiting and watching to see what happens. So it has always been with Mabel Normand ever since she left a Staten Island home, her big glowing eyes filled with hopes that materialized as she learned to make millions laugh.

She has been watched from afar, a lone solitary figure of brilliance around whom many storms have broken, only to leave her carrying on somehow after they had spent their fury. Today, as she goes before the motion picture audiences in her personal appearance tour, thousands of eyes will seek in every gesture she makes, some tell-tale evidence which will reveal the yearning in her woman's heart for the coming of a man whose love and strength can protect her from whatever strife Destiny still intends investing her future with.

The unaccountable killing of William Desmond Taylor in his Hollywood home several years ago cast its mysterious shadows over Mabel Normand. Her name, and that of Mary Miles Minter, was on every tongue for days and days after the director was found shot to death. There were nasty insinuations...innuendo-accusations...suspensions that frightened Mabel Normand and shook her with the mercilessness of a Fate that seemed to stop only at making her circumstantially guilty of Taylor's death. Of course such things were but vague, unpleasant sounds echoing from the confusing and contradictory mess of police, newspaper and scandal theories which ran riot after the murder. They were enough, however, to throttle Mabel Normand's being just as if some giant, ruthless hand had reached out and shaken her in an iron grip.

Now, reflecting upon the attempt to make capital of the fact that her chauffeur, Greer, shot and wounded wealthy Courtland S. Dines, the petite actress demands to know why she is always being called upon to defend herself from something...someone.

"I have never intentionally harmed anyone. Except indirectly, I had nothing to do with the two tragedies which have brought unfortunate notoriety to me and spelled my name in red all over the world," she said when asked if she had a vindictive nature, and wanted revenge for anything she regarded as a wrong to herself.

Mabel Normand's own version of the gun play that occurred in Dines' apartment was published in this magazine several weeks ago, and her statements back up the reiterated contention she now makes as her innocence in the entire fracas that ended in bloodshed.

Greer, the chauffeur who was responsible for the trigger pulling, came to her employ highly recommended by Charles Ray. He had been in Miss Normand's bedroom several times to fix electric wires and make several minor repairs. But he had never trespassed beyond the role of a hired automobile driver insofar as his relations to her were concerned, she claims, thus emphatically quashing the innuendo stories to the effect that Greer fired at Dines because he was jealous of Miss Normand.

The comedienne traces the shooting back to an event that took place Christmas Day, when Edna Purviance and Courtland Dines, whom she claims were engaged in spite of their recent denials of this, came to her house with an organ grinder and a monkey. Mabel told her visitors she was going out to dinner, but remained with them for a little while, clowning around with the monkey. Before they all left, Miss Purviance gave a box of handkerchiefs to Mabel's housekeeper as a Christmas present. This is a detail which must be remembered she declares. The housekeeper rushed out to a store and bought a pair of brushes as a present to Mr. Dines. But the latter forgot to take them away with him.

"On New Year's Day, Edna and Cort telephoned me to come down to his apartment. I didn't want to go, but foolishly yielded to Edna's pleading. I had arranged to enter a hospital for an appendicitis operation in a few days. Consequently I could not touch liquor of any kind.

"My chauffeur had instructions to call me at a certain hour. Much has been said," went on Mabel, "about his calling me earlier than I asked him to. This is where the Christmas present point comes in. Cort started joking about how he had forgotten my housekeeper's gift. I called my house and told Greer to bring it right over.

"When Greer entered the apartment Edna was in the bathroom. Courtland Dines was with me in the one and only other room. At the moment Dines had a bottle in his hand. I didn't see the shot fired, but I do know the oil man

abused my chauffeur. It must be remembered that Dines is big and husky, while Greer is a little fellow, no physical match for the other man. Greer says he was afraid that Dines would strike him with a bottle. Perhaps Cort's well-known love of brawls, which is common knowledge in Hollywood, led my chauffeur to this belief. Anyway, Greer shot, with the result that everybody knows."

Mabel Normand admits that the pistol used was one that a director had given her in California. But she states it would have been easy enough for Greer to have taken it from her establishment without her knowledge.

And so, in the above way, Mabel Normand, famous first as a Mack Sennett star, and then in her own right as a star-producer, told again of the second tragedy whose shadows have seeped into her life and filled it with the bitter knowledge that fame and riches do not suffice when one walks alone in the valley, forced by Fate to fight battles that try the hearts and souls of the strongest.

Although Mabel Normand would not say so in so many words, I cannot help but believe that down in her secret heart where she keeps a record of her tragic past, there is an answer to her self-put question regarding marriage. And that answer is:

"Yes, I would have been happier if I had loved and married years ago. Life would have been kinder."

Sometimes we are forced by circumstances to look upon those who have been swept up to the mountain peaks of fame and fortune with eyes that see far beyond the glamour of lofty place. The things that have strewn Mabel Normand's pathway to high success and popularity with shadows, should make us wonder. After all, hasn't Fate made this slender little girl with a curl in the center of her forehead pay a heart breaking price for her lonely place on the mountain peaks: a place from which she has been swept down twice into swirling shadows, poignantly alone in her two hours of tragedy?

* from *Variety*, April 23, 1924

Greer Case Postponed

With the expectation that Mabel Normand will have returned to California by May 26, District Attorney Keys [sic], with consent of counsel for the defense, asked Judge Crail in the Superior Court for a postponement of the Greer Case until that date.

Warrants were issued last week for the arrest of Greer, Miss Normand's chauffeur, on a liquor charge following a raid upon his room by the police, who claim to have found five quarts of the beverage, but not Greer.

* from *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 27, 1924

Fox (theater) -- Mabel Normand, popular comedienne of the screen will appear in person at this theatre this week in connection with the showing of her latest laughter maker, "The Extra Girl," which is the story of a country girl's adventures in Hollywood. "The Extra Girl" marks the return of Miss Normand to the Mack Sennett fold inasmuch as it is an original story written by this famous film director who has developed so many of the screen's stars...

Miss Normand will appear daily, and demonstrate her versatility in a chummy and interesting chat with the audience. A film reel entitled "Meet Miss Normand," will also be shown.

* from *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 29, 1924

There is nothing new in "The Extra Girl," the latest Mabel Normand picture which is seen at the Fox this week. The comedy, written by Mack Sennett, combines slapstick with sentiment without achieving particularly interesting results. Admirers of Mabel Normand, however, have a double opportunity to enjoy the popular comedienne, since she is appearing at the theatre three times daily this week in conjunction with the picture. The picture is the old story of the stage-struck country girl who wants to go to "Hollywood and "into pictures." So far, so good. But in her efforts to get there she finds it necessary to scale walls, hide under beds, drive in a rickety wagon and leap on a moving train. At times the very ludicrousness of the situations provides a laugh. Miss Normand makes the most of the part and manages to inject as much humor as possible into the worn-out plot.

When the stage-struck Sue finally reaches Hollywood, in reply to a telegram stating that her photograph won the motion-picture contest, it is only to find that it was not her photograph at all. She is given a job in the costume room as helper and eventually reaches the ranks of the extras. The best scenes come at the end, when Sue is left alone on the set with a lion which she believes is only the old pet dog dressed up.

* from *Screenland*, May 1924

The Jinx on Mabel

Scandal loves a shining mark; so it lives in Hollywood that it may watch the stars.

Scandal loves to hit a movie star and see him squirm and hear him make denial--but Scandal is cross-eyed and bigoted and blind, and even its microscopic lenses will not aid it to clear vision.

It has spattered Herbert Rawlinson, smirched Bill Hart, driven Fatty Arbuckle off the screen, and now is crushing Mabel Normand.

And Rawlinson and Hart and Arbuckle are the cleanest trio of men that have ever played in pictures. And Mabel's is the warmest heart that ever beat on a moving picture lot!

There is a jinx that walks with Mabel, a jinx that is Scandal's friend. Let her bury herself among her books for years and years; let her busy herself with work at the studio, or over her drawing board at home; let her live her life as she may; someday the jinx will take her to the home of a friend.

And then there is talk. Women's clubs in narrow little towns throughout the land will bar her pictures from their sanctimonious theaters; chivalrous censors will condemn her immediately; ministers who zealously follow the gentle Nazarene in all His ways, show her no Christ-like mercies.

Two years ago Mabel stopped at the home of William Desmond Taylor, to return a book she had borrowed [sic], to have a chat with him, and run along. Taylor took her out to her car, and raised her hand to his lips--in the Continental manner that distinguished him--and said "Goodbye, little lady"--and was found in his home next morning, dead, a bullet hole in his side.

There was a girl who lived next door to Taylor, and she came home at midnight with a wealthy clubman's friend. She was drunk. She insisted on going into Taylor's home and having "another lil' drink."

She almost staggered into the open doorway. She fought her companion with loud words, with vulgar profanity, and with uncertain and trembling hands.

The neighborhood was aroused. All the neighbors knew of the affair. But not a word was said. Her reputation was at stake. She might have given material testimony about that open door. But she was never called. There was no jinx on her.

Mabel had come in the daylight, and had gone away in the daylight. But it was Mabel who got all the notoriety out of the murder--Mabel and Mary Miles Minter.

Mary came into the case but slightly--her letters were found in Taylor's house. Some of them were printed. She was only a child, however, an innocent lovely child. She said she was engaged to Taylor, and that they would have married. And she remained the innocent child--as far as the censors knew.

Ah, Mabel might have kept out of it--but her sympathy was too great. She must tell the world how fine a man this Taylor was, and how she had liked him. It was the only tribute she could give him--and she would not hold it back though it put a brand upon her.

It was not the thing to do--perhaps. Only a man should have been as brave, and as scornful of public opinion.

Mabel was sick for months. Mabel went abroad. Mabel returned and made some comedies. Mabel took up life where she had left off when Taylor died. The jinx seemed to have been satisfied.

And New Year's day she went to see two friends--stepped into an apartment for a little while--and the jinx laughed, and Scandal rocked with glee.

Come with me to Mabel's house. You'll love to hear her talk. She's interesting. She reads philosophies. She's a highbrow, but you'll not learn that from her. She's the most natural of the stars, the most human, the most original. And she loves to talk in the argot of the studios, the slangy patter of the lot--"that part is out"--"it's all wet"--hold it for a still." It takes real brains to appreciate the niceties of slang.

Oh, she'll spatter the room with English undefiled if you wish--and does it often. But she prefers quaint slang--and she can make it turn handsprings as well as the great George Ade.

You will meet stars in Hollywood who talk in stilted phrases, and smooth involved sentences--when they deign to speak to you at all. And they will quote you lines from authors whose names they may remember--bits they have learned for the impressing of newspaper men. Their words are cloaks to hide their ragged minds.

But talk to Mary Pickford, Viola Dana, Mae Busch, Blanche Sweet, Helen Ferguson or Mabel Normand--they have things to say--and say them naturally.

Come on, let's talk to Mabel.

She's going out as we enter, and she bids us come along.

"My flowers," she says, 'are withering. I can't endure them. We ourselves wither fast enough. Let us not have dying things around us."

We escort her to the Japanese florist down the street, and Mabel goes into little ecstasies over sweet peas and violets, and poppies, and lilies and fresh green ferns; arranges them in pleasing combinations of color; smells them; loves them with her eyes.

A little thing, Mabel, with black hair and big brown eyes--and the lines of suffering still in her face. You will hear no slang today from Mabel--for who that knows good English speaks in slang when he is sad?

She isn't the same Mabel we used to know; the rollicking, joyous, chummy, prank-playing star of the Sennett lot. She is a chastened woman, a suffering little girl who cannot understand why fate should whip her as it has.

"Only a little while ago," she says, "I started again to take up my drawing. You know I used to draw when I was a little girl. I had no technique, but the artists I knew said I had originality, and that was better than technique.

"I used to draw for the Butterick people long ago, you know? And then some artist got me to pose. I posed for many of them--in New York. The Leyendeckers, Flagg, Gibson, Stanlaws, Christy, Hutt--lots of them. I got \$1.50 in the morning; and \$1.50 in the afternoon. I spent 30 cents in carfare going and coming, between Staten Island and New York.

"I loved to pose. I would stand so still and look out at the clouds, and the tops of great buildings. And I would dream. Such dreams as I had!

"Never then did I think the day would come when I would see my name in ugly headlines in every newspaper that I saw. Never then did I think I would hate and loathe my name; or that the nights would come when I would put my hands to my eyes and try to shut out the vision of that name.

"Never then did I think that my brain would rock, saying to itself over and over--'Mabel Normand! Mabel Normand! Mabel Normand!!'--saying it over and over and over with a kind of horror at the repetition--saying it over and over until a merciful sleep would blot it out.

"A young girl's dreams--money enough to keep my mother and sister from want--money enough for lessons in painting and music--money enough for all the books and the flowers and the beautiful things I wanted--dreams of a little home, and children, a peace, and happiness!

"I didn't take the movies seriously then. It was just posing in front of a camera instead of a man with a brush and a box of pretty paints. I posed as a page for Griffith, and I didn't get home until morning. I could not be bothered with that. I didn't like to stay up so late--and I had to pose in the morning. I felt I couldn't afford to lose the \$2.70 net a day to pose in the movies, and so I didn't go back.

"One day I ran into Mack Sennett and Henry B. Walthall and some others, and they said Griffith was looking all over for me. They explained that I had held up the picture. I had registered in some scenes, and hence I must be in all the rest of that sequence. So of course I went back."

That was Mabel's start, and it was only a little time until she was getting \$100 a week, and the world was enjoying the freshness and the beauty and the charm and the sympathy that were hers. Hundreds, then thousands a week; fame; everything she had dreamed of, looking at the clouds as she posed.

There are stars who have saved their money; there are stars who have squandered it; there are stars who have lost it in stocks. Mabel gave it away.

She would see a girl weeping and ask her what was the matter.

"Your mother's going to die unless you can get her to the hospital? And you haven't got a cent?"

Great anger would ride Mabel.

"Why didn't you tell me before?"--she might never have seen the girl before. But mama was taken to the hospital, and Mabel paid the bills.

She had so much--and there were millions who had so little! Mabel--the star whom the censors condemn--used to cry sometimes because she could help so few.

She listened avidly to the studio chatter, sifted it for clues, hurried to the bedsides of carpenters or electricians who had been hurt in accidents, or who had been laid off because of lack of work.

Show her misfortune, and she would steal away from her work, taking flowers with her, and money, and a woman's sympathy.

One time in New York she was speeding along in her car. A big shiny car, and warm. She was wearing a new ermine coat. It cost some thousands of dollars. Outside on the snowy sidewalk she saw a girl, walking, bending into the wind, dressed in a thin skirt and a thinner jacket.

She stopped the car, got out, put her ermine coat on the girl, and jumped in the car again and cried "Drive on" before the girl could even thank her.

Ever a tear in her eye, ever a laugh in heart--before the jinx got busy. A man's brain, a man's endurance, a man's courage--a man's sane outlook--but a woman's sympathy and an imp's love of fun.

There was a woman writer in Los Angeles who had just been married. She was sitting in a theater box with the bridegroom, waiting for the play to begin, when Mabel walked into the box.

She knew the writer, and had heard of the wedding; but she didn't know the groom.

Yet she threw her arms about him, and whispered in his ear--loud enough for the bride to overhear--"Oswald, Oswald, I have found you at last, my darling. Oh, Oswald, life has been so bitter for us since you left. But you'll come back now to your wife and your little chee-ild? Oh promise me!"

"Mabel, you humbug," said the writer, "you almost frightened me!"

But the jest was so good it was repeated--and there were dull ones who knew not Mabel, and saw no jest whatever. They looked serious, and said, "where there's smoke there must be fire."

And then the Taylor tragedy.

"He was a gentleman," says Mabel. "An aristocrat who loved only brilliant minds. Many a girl has loved him--but I doubt if he loved any girl.

"He never did more than kiss my hand when he left me at my home. And he'd say, 'Goodbye, my clever little lady,' or 'Goodbye, little friend; when shall we meet again?"

"Nothing more than that. He always did the correct thing--sent flowers, books, candy. He was an elderly man and a scholar, a gentleman always.

"And the stories they told of him when he was dead--and the stories they told of me!"

"Well, maybe he was peculiar. Maybe he was all they say he was. I don't know. Looking back I can see little things--things I passed over at the time, not understanding.

"Oh, have you ever felt that no one in the world was honest and sincere? Haven't there been times in your life when you knew that all the world was false? That's how I felt then."

Yes. Scandal was almost satisfied. But his job was incomplete. Nearly two years, he waited to enter the Dines' apartment.

"I went to Mack Sennett's New Years eve," says Mabel. "But I left early, without seeing the New Year in. I was depressed and lonesome. I wanted to be alone.

"I came home, and wept most of the night, silly tears for myself. And I started a letter to my mother--a letter I finished next day."

She was addressing and signing New Year's cards--and the phone kept ringing. At 11 o'clock New Year's morning Edna called up and invited her to the Dines apartment. But Mabel was busy. At 1 o'clock, and at 2, and at 3, and 4, and 5 o'clock she rang.

"I thought there might be something the matter," says Mabel. So I went. Dines started joking about the Christmas package that Mrs. Edith Burns, my companion, had bought for him, and forgotten to give him.

"I called and asked Mrs. Burns to send it over with Joe--the chauffeur I knew as Joe Kelley, not as Horace Greer. And Joe came, and Dines had been drinking, and Joe shot him.

"A joke over a Christmas package, and I took it seriously, and once again my name danced before me in the headlines of a thousand daily papers--and once again my brain repeated 'Mabel Normand! Mabel Normand! Mabel Normand!' until I thought I should go mad."

It was Mabel who wrapped the wounded man in blankets; Mabel who called the doctor; Mabel who made arrangements to have him taken from the receiving hospital and its police doctors to the Good Samaritan and her own surgeons.

It is Feb. 1. Incidentally it is the second anniversary of the "breaking" of the Taylor murder story.

Greer is at liberty pending the outcome of the hearing. Dines is in the hospital, under bonds to reappear on the witness stand and say who shot him. He has sworn he does not remember. Mabel and Edna have testified, and made statements to the district attorney.

Perhaps you have already realized it was only Mabel's sympathy that placed her there with the Jinx.

Perhaps the censors will admit they were hasty, and the women's clubs they were wrong. Perhaps you will see her soon again on the screen, and laugh with her once more--and never remember her as she looks sitting alone in her home, anything but the Mabel of the films.

"We all make mistakes," she says as you murmur goodbye. But life is making mistakes, and learning from them. I have made mistakes of course--but in all my life I've harmed nobody but myself."

* from *Buffalo Enquirer*, May 12, 1924

Miss Normand Visits Falls

Mabel Normand, whose beauty and daring on the screen has thrilled and won the hearts of Cinema-lovers of many continents, stated that "reaching the peak of stardom is easy compared with staying there," when interviewed at the Hotel Statler on her arrival in Buffalo in connection with her appearance at Shea's Hippodrome. where her latest picture, "The Extra Girl," is showing all this week.

Miss Normand showed profound interest in topics ranging from Gen. Grant's home to Bobby Leach's proposed trip over Niagara Falls, and declared her greatest desire, while in Buffalo, was to visit the cataract.

It was revealed that Miss Normand's highest ambition is to appear on the legitimate stage, but she sees no hope of it. She expects to return to Hollywood to make her new picture, "Mary Ann," at the conclusion of her present tour.

Miss Normand spoke of her admiration for Gen. Grant, and of her recent visit to his birthplace in Mount Pleasant, Ohio. From the General she shifted to discussing marbles and requested that her secretary produce the agate that was presented to her by the Lang boy, winner of the Columbus, O., marble contest.

Miss Normand is appearing at the Hippodrome twice daily all this week, in connection with the showing of her picture.

* from *Buffalo Courier*, May 12, 1924

Mabel Normand has not been spoiled by stardom. From her suite in the Statler, where she is staying this week, she talked last night as vivaciously and as naturally about the things which interest her most as she does in her two appearances in person before audiences at a local theater, where her picture "The Extra Girl" is playing. No least bit of the hauteur and affectation which people are apt to associate with acclaimed artists can be detected in Miss Normand.

Gossiping ingenuously about everything from marbles to Gen. Grant's tomb, she showed the spontaneity, the persistent youthfulness of spirit which has endeared her to the movie-going public.

Dogs -- she has four of them, two chows and two police dogs, of which she is tremendously proud.

"During the war," she said, "we had a dachshund, too. You know, one of those long things" -- here she pantomimed with her hands.

"But my conscience began to bother me - a Teuton dog in a patriotic household. And besides it kept growing the wrong way."

Marbles -- she asked her secretary to bring her the agate which was given to her by the Lang boy, winner of the Columbus, Ohio, marble contest.

An intense admirer of Gen. Grant, she told of her recent visit to Grant's birthplace in Mount Pleasant, Ohio.

"Three little rooms," she said. "Grant's is all enclosed in glass. And the cabin stood for 101 years. I would have liked a birthplace like that."

She skips from thought to thought in her conversation, always lively, quick, as though giving her mind free play after the weightier matters of screen art and scheduled public appearances. About the industry in which she is a luminous star she said nothing until asked specific questions.

"Movie-struck girls? I hate to say anything on that. People are too apt to think it is a point with those who have 'arrived' to discourage possible rivals. But I say frankly the field is already greatly over-crowded. No girl without an assured income should ever go to Hollywood. Many screen personalities have gone for ages unrecognized. I've seen any number of beautiful girls up against it in Hollywood."

Miss Normand revealed that it was her great ambition to appear on the legitimate stage.

"I've never acted on the stage," she said. "And I see no hopes of it. When this present tour is completed I go back to Hollywood to make my next picture 'Mary Ann.'"

One need not interview Miss Normand. She interviews herself. One merely listens, intrigued by her boundless interest in even the most minor things, and her vast healthy enthusiasms or her hobbies. She has won two tennis championships in California. She dotes on skiing. Baseball was mentioned.

"May I go to a ball game?" she asked at once. As one man the mere males in the room volunteered their services. And then a frown of disappointment came to her face when she remembered that the treat would conflict with her afternoon public appearance.

"Of course I could go afterward," she said ruefully. "But the big thrill of it is when they pitch the first ball."

Stardom -- the imagination of the movie-stricken rests at that magic word. But Mabel Normand who, with a host of other cinema stars, has put in many arduous hours as an "extra" at \$5 a day, shattered the conventional view.

"Reaching the peak is easy," she said earnestly, "compared to staying there. This is something the public never seems to consider. It is infinitely harder to keep one's name in bright lights before the public eye than to mount to the top rung of the ladder."

Miss Normand has no complexes. Throngs of Buffalonians who had seen her in pictures jumped yesterday at the opportunity to see her in person. The screen changes some personalities so greatly.

"Will she be different? Will she look the same? Will she act the same?"

"Mickie" tripped onto the stage, and there was no mistaking. Throughout her amusing talk about the lion who played "opposite" her in "The Extra Girl," she acted as hundreds of thousands have known her for years. She is direct, simple, naive, interested, always interesting.

* from *Radio Digest*, May 13, 1924

Mable [sic] Normand the petite and dainty film star recently gave a very amusing talk from station WTAM.

* from *Variety*, May 21, 1924

Greer Trial June 16

When the Greer trial is called for disposition on June 16, after being postponed from May 26 so that Mabel Normand can appear as a witness, the court expects to clear the case off the docket.

Courtland S. Dines, the rich clubman, who was shot by Miss Normand's chauffeur, is reported as showing every inclination to let the matter drop, but the case has been ordered through for trial on that date.

Judge Crail has his mind made up to give no further postponements, notwithstanding that some of the most important witnesses are now outside the state of California.

Mabel Normand is still making personal appearances with "The Extra Girl," her last picture, which Mack Sennett made and which is being released through Associated Exhibitors.

As far as Miss Normand is concerned she is very anxious, so the story goes, for the case to either be settled out of court or thrown out of court, as she fears the resultant publicity.

The Associated Exhibitors have done everything to batter down the belief that arose at the time of the shooting that the Normand films should be banned in some sections. Miss Normand's engagements have been, as a whole, successful.

However, the Greer trial may spring a new angle.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 17, 1924

Mabel Normand Clashes with Greer's Attorney

Very much like the "three firecrackers going off," to which Mabel Normand compared the shots that figured in the shooting of Courtland Dines at the interrupted New Year's party in his apartments was Mabel Normand's own testimony on the witness stand in Judge Crail's court yesterday.

The difference was that Mabel's verbal firecrackers sputtered and blazed continuously as she told the story of the shooting, for which Horace Greer, her former chauffeur, is on trial.

Miss Normand was by no means an unwilling witness, although she displayed a hazy memory on some points on which information was sought, particularly when Defense Attorney S. S. Hahn placed her under cross-examination was she more than ready to come back with swift and emphatic answers that kept the crowded courtroom laughing.

Once, when Hahn was working to tangle her in the meshes of "what did you say when you testified before," the Normand temper slipped its moorings.

"You haven't any right to cross examine me like that," she said. "What do you want to be so mean to me for? That isn't the way you were supposed to act."

Prosecution attorneys murmured something about manner toward witnesses, Judge Crail smiled.

"This witness seems perfectly able to take care of herself," he said.

Miss Normand began her story by telling of her visit to Dines' apartment in response to telephone invitations from Dines and Edna Purviance.

"The first thing I did was to pick up some cigarette butts," she said, "then we sat and talked like anybody."

The cigarette butts re-entered the examination when Greer's attorney made passing mention of "While you were smoking."

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Miss Normand, icicles clinging to every word. "I was not smoking."

"I beg yours," said the attorney, with a bow that called for a camera to record it.

Later, said Miss Normand, Dines telephoned to her home and told Greer, her chauffeur, to bring over the Christmas gift that Dines had forgotten to take with him. Miss Normand was sitting on the couch near the door, she said, when Greer came in. Dines was standing near the table. Miss Purviance was in an adjoining room.

"I heard a knock, and Greer came in," said Miss Normand. "I walked over to the bedroom door to speak to Edna. I was just inside when I heard three noises, like firecrackers. Edna and I ran out into the living room."

"I saw Dines all bent over. He said, 'I'm plugged.' He was all over blood. I just saw a white shirt and vest, then the whole crowd came in, after we had helped Dines over to the bed. I never saw so many people in my life at once.

"I didn't see Greer there, after Dines said he was plugged. I didn't hear Greer and Dines talking together at all. I didn't see any gun there."

Greer's counsel turned to the bottle with which the defense claimed Dines was about to strike Greer when the latter shot. A squat, brown, hospitable looking bottle, it stood on the counsel table with a cardboard tag tied around its plump neck.

"Is this the bottle you saw in Dines' apartment?" he demanded, after Miss Normand had insisted that she saw only one bottle.

"It looks like it, and it doesn't look like it," answered Mabel.

"How much whisky was in it?"

Mabel carefully measured out with thumb and finger about two perpendicular inches.

"That was all," she said. "Just enough for the three of us to have a little drink, when somebody said, 'It's New Year's.'"

"Dines," said Mabel, "was not exactly drunk, but he had plenty."

"Isn't it a fact," demanded the defense attorney, "after he had quizzed Miss Normand over and over again on what she told Greer about calling for her, 'isn't it a fact that you told him that you were afraid to stay at Dines' place because you had to go to the hospital the next day, and you knew you would get drunk if you stayed?'"

Mabel's voice was full of ice again.

"Certainly not," she said. "I wouldn't talk to a driver about going to a hospital, and anyway, I wasn't going the next day."

Miss Normand was also very hazy about the gun. She had owned a gun, she said, but she didn't remember what it looked like, and she hadn't seen it for months and months. The gun which was produced in court looked much too clean and new to be hers, she said.

"Did you tell Greer to shoot Dines?" the defense counsel asked.

"What would I tell him a thing like that for?" countered Mabel.

The defense questioned both Miss Normand and Edna Purviance about the amount of clothing that Dines had on. Both were rather vague about it, but they decided that all that was missing was a coat, and possibly an outside shirt...

The prosecution is in charge of Chief Trial Deputy Charles Fricke and Deputy District Attorney Hammer, S. S. Hahn, Clarence Conlin and P. R. Simon represent Greer; Milton Cohen is Mabel Normand and [Claire] Woolwine watches over Miss Purviance's participation.

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, June 17, 1924

The reading of the testimony given by Dines at the preliminary hearing in the case was scheduled to follow Mrs. Burns' appearance on the stand. Dines, who is at the bedside of his father who is ill in Denver, displayed a remarkable lapse of memory when he testified. He said he couldn't remember that Greer shot him.

Dines' lapse of memory and the haziness of the testimony of Miss Normand and Miss Purviance caused Justice Hanby [the judge at the preliminary hearing] to charge openly that there was collusion between the attorneys and the witnesses in the case to cause the charge against Greer to be dropped. And in this connection a remark made by Miss Normand while she was under cross-examination late yesterday was regarded as somewhat significant today.

There were two versions of what Miss Normand said. Defense Attorney Hahn was questioning her sharply when she flared up. According to one version she said to Hahn:

"You haven't any right to cross-examine me like that. What do you want to be so mean to me for? That isn't the way you were supposed to act."

The other version was that she snapped out

"You aren't supposed to be so hard. The idea of cross-examining me like that! That wasn't the understanding I had with you." But regardless of the words she used the gist of her remark was the same in both versions. However, if Hahn had any "understanding" to be easy in his cross-examination of Miss Normand he certainly forgot it when he questioned her on her story of the shooting.

There was considerable speculation today as to what caused Miss Normand to make the remark...

The cross-examination of Miss Normand was marked by lively spats between her and Attorney Hahn and by her gesturing and the way she answered questions. The crowd got a tremendous "kick" out of it.

Once when she was cautioned to refer to Greer as Greer and not as "Kelly," the name he gave when she employed him, she turned to Judge Crail and expostulated:

"I beg your pardon, you honor. You see, I don't know the law. I mean, I don't know the defendant. How's that?"

Again, when she was asked how big a man Dines was, she turned to Judge Crail with a sweet smile and said:

"Your honor, I think Mr. Dines was just like you, your honor. May I say that?"

"We'd better not make the matter too personal," said the judge, sternly.

Hahn asked her if she had told Greer to shoot Dines.

"For heaven's sake--no!" she retorted. "Why should I tell anybody to plug anybody, anyhow?"

She said Dines had not been "exactly drunk," but that he had "had plenty" And when she was asked to account for Greer's actions when Dines was shot, she said, "He must have been crazy or wild--I do not know."

Substantially, her testimony as the same as she gave at the preliminary hearing. She said her back was toward Greer and Dines when she heard three sounds "like firecrackers popping" and when she turned around Dines was pressing his hands to a spot of blood on his chest and gasping, "I've been plugged." She said she had not seen Greer shot. She admitted there had been drinking in the apartment and measured off two inches on the whisky bottle taken from the apartment as the amount left in the bottle when she arrived.

"Just enough for three drinks," she said...

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, June 17, 1924

" Edith Bristol

Star's Testimony is Made Vivid by Gestures

In the testimony of Mabel Normand, film star witness in the trial of Horace Greer for the shooting of Courtland Dines on New Year's day, there are two features which will never go into the stenographic report.

One of them is Miss Normand's broad--oh, very broad--"a." It is "a" as in "bawth," "cawn't," "rather" and "pawdon." A real Cavendish Square breadth of accent, so like dear old Lonnon!

The other item of testimony doomed to escape the official record is Miss Normand's conversational hands--unless they bring a cinema into court to reproduce her answers.

Talk? Miss Normand's hands fairly chatter. They are voluble, loquacious. And when she gets excited they stutter.

A running obligato of gesture accompanies her words. It began when, on being sworn, the comedienne inquired which hand to raise in taking the oath. After once getting her hands into gear, she threw them into high speed and illustrated every answer with a gesture.

Attorney Hahn, cross-examining, displays a curiosity as to the bottle on the table of Dines' apartment. Miss Normand impersonates the pouring of the drink. She illustrates the exact size of right and proper drink, the amount remaining is measured by her hands, and the fluttering fingers go through the "business" of the convivial scene. Her hands point out that delicate distinction between a man who is drunk and a man who is only "drinking."

Her hands show the jury--which looks like a comfortable, motherly meeting of the Ladies' Aid into which two men have strayed inadvertently--just how the door opened into the bedroom, just how she powdered her nose, just the way she gathered up the offending cigarette butts which marred the order of Dines' apartment on her arrival.

Just the manner in which Dines announced that he had been "plugged" and just the way a "plugged" man looks when he is, as Miss Normand expresses it, "all full of blood," is acted out by the talkative hands.

An airy wave and an outspread gesture depict the sound of the “three firecrackers going off,” and another far flung gesticulation shows just how it feels to be deprived of one’s own car and forced to ride to the police station with the officers.

Didn’t someone write a play to Mary’s ankle?

If anything so mute as an ankle is entitled to be made the theme of a drama, then some aspiring playwright should compose a scenario of the Dines New Year’s celebration and title it “Mabel’s Fingers.”

* from *Variety*, June 18, 1924

Mabel Normand Vexed By Cross-Examination

Before a jury of 10 women and two men the Greer trial began yesterday with Edna Purviance and Mabel Normand acting as witnesses for the state. Miss Normand was brought to the court under subpoena, as she failed to appear at the morning session.

Each of the film stars repeated the stories told at the preliminary hearing, although Miss Normand, when cross-examined by the defense, lost her temper and said:

“You haven’t the right to cross-examine me like this. What do you want to be so mean to me for? That isn’t the way you were supposed to act.”²¹⁰

The state read the testimony of Dines and, after calling a few witnesses, rested its case for the day. The plea of self-defense has been entered by the defending side.

A wire has been received from Dines saying he cannot be here for 30 days and the district attorney will ask the grand jury to investigate the reason why the \$5,000 bond Dines posted was returned to him before the trial commenced.

* from *Arizona Republican*, June 19, 1924

Greer Refuses To Tell About Dines’ Affair

Los Angeles -- Horace A. Greer, chauffeur, who was to have his own star witness in the Superior court trial at which he is charged with the attempted murder of Courtland S. Dines, Denver oil operator, sprung the surprise of the case today when he refused to testify, declaring that he would rather take the chance of going to the penitentiary than say anything that might reflect upon his former employer, Mabel Normand, screen actress.

The chauffeur’s action let down with a thud court spectators and those connected with the case, who had been elevated to a high degree of expectancy by the statements of S. S. Hahn, chief counsel, that Greer would be placed upon the witness stand to tell “everything” that happened in Dines’ apartment last New Year’s night when the Denver man was shot.

Greer refusal to testify came near the close of the day’s session, during which the defense charged that portions of the chauffeur’s statement to police had been withheld to “protect certain people in the moving picture industry.” Miss Normand and Edna Purviance, both screen actresses were members of the party at which the alleged shooting occurred.

With Greer’s statement that he would take a chance on a prison term defense attorneys threw up their hands and offered no further testimony. Final arguments to the jury were started tonight.

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, June 19, 1924

Greer Case is Ready for Jurors

The case for Horace Greer, former chauffeur for Mabel Normand, tried for shooting Courtland Dines during a party Dines staged with Miss Normand and Edna Purviance New Year’s day, was ready for the jury today...

Greer, who refused to testify in his own defense because, he said, he would “rather go to the penitentiary than say anything that would hurt Miss Normand” watched the jurors closely as Fricke was completing the arguments.

His decision to stay off the witness stand, which caused the attorneys to throw up their hands in consternation, was made at the last minute, after his attorneys had promised he would testify and “tell everything.”

Without having produced one word of testimony, Greer’s lawyers were compelled to rely on what they said were flaws in the prosecution’s case in their arguments to the jury. They shouted that Dines’ own testimony and that of the other prosecution witnesses upheld Greer’s story he shot in self defense.

Defense Attorney Conlin pictured the New Year’s day party at Dines’ apartment as a Roman saturnalia where Dines, Miss Normand and Miss Purviance were defying the constitution by drinking. He characterized Greer as the “only clean soul” of the four, who was intent upon rescuing his employer from what was going on...

Conlin said Greer shot Dines because Dines reached for a bottle to strike him with when he insisted that Miss Normand return home with him.

“Which was the more honorable?” he asked. “Was it Mabel, the cigarette girl, who wants us to believe she was there as an uplifter? Was it Dines, the Roman gladiator, posing in his undershirt and reaching for the whisky bottle? Or was it this boy Greer, the only sober one there, who wanted to take his employer from such a scene?”

S. S. Hahn, chief defense counsel, devoted his argument to a flaw-picking attack on Dines’ “I-don’t-remember” story.

He ridiculed the testimony given by Miss Normand and Miss Purviance.

“They don’t want the truth of this affair to become known,” he said.

“They are afraid it will besmirch the motion picture profession. But the stars have got their punishment and the only lesson that a jury can teach such dark stars is by acquitting this boy.”...

²¹⁰ This report should be taken with some circumspection as it seems to suggest that Mabel, and in an absurdly careless manner, is deliberately trying to cover up something or that the attorney was not acting according to a pre-arranged script. At the same time, the clipping does not refer to what she was questioned about, or in what specific context her response came. Yet if this account is otherwise accurate, it could be that she was angered at the cross-examining attorney’s belligerent treatment of her, and insulting insinuations he was making. Bruce Long offers this observation: “It is possible that [her] clash with the defense attorney came after he had focused on a discrepancy in her testimony. For example, at the preliminary hearing she reportedly testified that she did not notice a bottle in the room; at the trial she remembered it very clearly and even remembered having a drink from it.”

* from *Arizona Republican*, June 20, 1924

Greer Arrested On Acquittal of Dines' Shooting

Los Angeles -- Horace A. Greer, former chauffeur for Mabel Normand the actress, was acquitted late today in superior court on a charge of assault with intent to murder Courtland S. Dines, Denver oil man, only to be immediately re-arrested for an alleged violation of the Wright act, the state prohibition law.

The jury, composed of 10 women and two men, had just finished reading its acquittal in the attempted murder case when police served Greer with a warrant in which he was accused of the alleged violation of the Wright act, the state prohibition law.

The jury composed of 10 women and two men, had just finished reading its acquittal in the attempted murder case when police served Greer with a warrant in which he was accused of the alleged prohibition violation. The chauffeur was taken to the University police station, where he will stand trial in police court there.

The liquor charge was brought against Greer two months ago when police claimed that they found whiskey during a raid on his room. Greer protested the charge, saying that the liquor belonged to a man with whom he roomed.

Dines Glad It's Over

Denver -- Courtland S. Dines, informed that Horace Greer was acquitted in Los Angeles today on charges of assault with a deadly weapon on Dines, said:

"I have no statement to make, but am darned glad that it is over." ²¹¹

* from *Arizona Republican*, June 22, 1924

Greer's Failure To Testify Costs Job As Chauffeur

Los Angeles -- Mabel Normand, motion picture actress, does not intend to employ Horace A. Greer, her former chauffeur again.

Greer, acquitted yesterday on a charge of attempting to murder Courtland S. Dines, Denver oil man last New Year's night, forfeited her help when he refused to take the witness stand during his trial, the film star said. His refusal had been interpreted as an act of chivalry to his former employer.

Arraigned in police court today on a new charge of violating the state prohibition enforcement act, Greer pleaded not guilty, asked for a jury trial, and was released under a \$250 bond which he produced.

Regardless of the outcome of his newest tilt with the law, however, he will not do any chauffeuring for Miss Normand again, she announced.

"I am not going to employ him again," said the film star whom Greer told police he was trying to take home from Dines' apartment when the shooting began New Year's night, "I would have been willing to help him if he needed it, but after he refused to take the witness stand and clear up all that impression of trying to hide something, I felt I did not want him in my employ again.

* from *Variety*, July 2, 1924

Will Miss Normand Be Left Flat On The Lot?

Mabel Normand's contract with Mack Sennett is completed and has not been renewed. It looks like a permanent business split between the film star and the comedy producer.

A further prospective is that Miss Normand's future film career is uncertain. Recognized producers are somewhat wary of the comedienne as a result of the publicity she has obtained during the past few years.

The two shootings in which Miss Normand was named, the Taylor killing and the more recent Dines affair, are said to have cost Sennett extra expenditures for the overcoming of the notoriety, while Miss Normand's last release necessitated a special publicity staff, by itself, to offset the Dines odor.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, July 18, 1924

Sennett Denies Is Releasing Normand

"As long as the public continues to demand Mabel Normand my company will continue to employ her services."

Thus Mack Sennett, on return yesterday from a fishing trip at Santa Barbara, tersely denied the former printed reports that he had broken with Mabel Normand because of recent publicity which came her way in connection with the Greer-Dines shooting case.

Miss Normand, according to present plans, is to make "Mary Ann" next. This is the story which Sennett has had in mind for some time. She was to have done it when she made "The Extra Girl," but the latter was substituted at the last minute due to the fact that Richard Jones, after trying out several comediennes, could find no actress who could do the name part as well as it should be done except Mabel.

²¹¹ The acquittal of Greer, not surprisingly, raises some interesting questions. Clearly, there was some kind of cover up going on, but about what exactly? Three possible explanations might be these: (1) Dines' account of what happened (see *Los Angeles Examiner*, Jan. 3, 1924) suggests that Greer felt he needed to act on Mabel's behalf because Dines (perhaps because Dines was drunk or because he thought he was acting in her best interest) would not let Mabel leave when she wanted to. Dines resented the chauffeur's impudence when Greer challenged him, with the result that Dines was more adamant about not letting Mabel go. Greer then took matters into his own hands. Since this behavior on Dines' part would possibly show him in a bad light, and since he had already suffered more than enough, it was decided to drop the matter. (2) Mabel's perhaps conflicting sentiments about whether she wanted to go or stay caused the two men confusion as to what she wanted or needed. This, needless to say would, not put her role in a positive light. Alternatively in this regard, Adela Rogers St. John, in *Love, Laughter and Tears*, states that the shooting occurred because of an insulting remark Dines made to Mabel when Greer was present. It may be that what Mrs. Burns overheard on the phone sounded either insulting or threatening to Mabel, and it was on this basis that Greer decided to take along the revolver. Perhaps it was thought best not to have a trial which, if it took place, would bring out either the confusion Mabel possibly brought about or the purported insult, causing her to suffer further in the press -- something both Dines and Greer wanted to avoid. (3) Greer was secretly in the pay of someone else whose identity it was thought best not to risk revealing.

* from *Variety*, July 23, 1924

Sennett Says Mabel Normand Will Work

Mack Sennett on returning from a fishing trip denied he had broken his business connections with Mabel Normand because of the Greer-Dines shooting. He asserts that as long as the public continues to demand her pictures his company will keep her in their employ.

According to his present plans, Sennett says he will present Miss Normand in "Mary Ann," which she was to have done prior to "The Extra Girl."

Sennett would not admit or deny that Miss Normand is no longer under contract to him, and that she is simply employed from picture to picture, or when he finds it convenient. Reports have it, however, that she is at the present time considering offers made by a number of producers.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, August 1, 1924

Mabel Normand in Oil

Mabel Normand is going into the oil business, according to word just received.

It appears that rumors that the star has quit the motion pictures for good are unfounded, but the Mexican Petroleum Company substantiates the story that Miss Normand is going into extensive oil-field operation. The records, says the report, further disclose that she has purchased upwards of two miles of promising oil territory in Duren, Torrance county, New Mexico. Her property is adjacent to that of Allen Forrest.

* from *Duluth Herald*, Minnesota, August 5, 1924

Mabel Normand spent an hour in Duluth on her way to Ely. She will spend ten days fishing, resting.

"We shall be at the lakes about ten days and then I am going to start work on a new picture in which I shall be Mary Ann."

* from *Variety*, August 13, 1924

Mabel Normand's Vacation

Duluth, Minn. -- Mabel Normand, with Mr. and Mrs. Chandler Sprague of Los Angeles, have been at Burnside Lake, near here, for a week. They will shortly leave the resort.

Miss Normand is there for a complete rest among the balsam and pine forests.

* from *Memphis Community Appeal*, August 17, 1924

Mabel Normand has taken a trip back to a quiet spot in Minnesota where she will meet her mother and take a rest from all the storm and strife incident to the Dines shooting affair. She expects to be gone only a fortnight.

* from *Photoplay*, September 1924

Did you ever run ten blocks to a fire and then find that it was only some measly little woodshed burning? Sure you have and so have we. In fact that is about the only kind we ever did run to until recently. And then we felt repaid for all the futile miles we had run.

For this fire was different. It was a garage fire and among the eight garages blazing was one that belonged to Mabel Normand. And in her garage was a spick and span limousine. It was and still is the pride of her heart, despite the fact that the flames damaged it about \$1,000 worth.

But it was not the burning or saving of her limousine that made the fire such a success from the spectators' viewpoint. The fair Mabel furnished the excitement. Aroused from peaceful slumbers, she rushed to the garage clad only in her pajamas, slippers and a filmy something thrown over her shoulders. She has appeared in many fire scenes in pictures but never to better advantage than she did that early morning.

The dashing comedienne took command of the firemen in directing their work of saving her garage and limousine, and no firemen ever worked harder or more valiantly than did those gallants of the Wilshire fire station.

When it was all over she took them into her home and served breakfast.

It was some fire and some breakfast.

* from *Extra Girl* publicity sheet, September 4, 1924, Mack Sennett papers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

Mabel Normand Gets The Laughs In "The Extra Girl"

What the Critics Say.

Mr. G. A. Atkinson in The "Daily Express"

"Mabel Normand is at her best in the intensely human, albeit comical, adventures of 'The Extra Girl'....Miss Normand is regarded by the cinema public with an affection which would astonish those who think that film plays are things written in the sand."

The "Evening Standard"

"'The Extra Girl,' which has just been privately shown in London, is A FILM COMEDY OUT OF THE RUT. The generally unforced humor is mingled with a Charles Chaplin-like wistfulness, the simple story flows naturally and without absurd improbabilities, and what is most to the point there is consistently good acting. The escape of a lion in a cinema studio is the thrill in one of the most genuinely human films I have seen for a long time."

The "Film Renter"

"This is a picture that exhibitors can safely book, for it is suitable for any and every kind of audience. It possesses great comedy, excellent drama, and real pathos. 'The Extra Girl' is a showman's picture."

The "Cinema"

"Few patrons have forgotten Mabel Normand, and SHE HAS NEVER DONE BETTER WORK THAN THIS. There are moments when the audience is practically hypnotized into laughter! And every exhibitor knows there is nothing like laughter to swell the box-office receipts."

The "Bioscope"

"Mabel Normand's Performance -- The Best Thing She Has Ever Done -- is a triumph of natural, spontaneous drollery....It has scarcely a single incident which is not touched with originality..."The Extra Girl" is a picture which we have no hesitation in recommending as an almost certain winner for any type of house."

· from Associated Exhibitor News

Mabel Normand, under a new Mack Sennett contract, will hereafter make at least two and never more than three feature film each year. Each one, it is stipulated, must cost 350,000 to 500,000

For a while it looked as if she were spoiled -- were being given her head too much, perhaps -- but in this picture she is the old Mabel again.

Miss Normand looks very pretty at times and other times seems white and worn. She does some very credible acting in the serious scenes, and, of course, carries the comedy end of the role splendidly.

Film smashed theatre records for attendance at Mission Theatre. Booked for four weeks, it ran eight. Thousands had to be turned away at Central Theatre, Broadway

* from *Los Angeles Times*, September 12, 1924

Mabel Normand Is Named

Screen Actress Made Co-Respondent in Divorce Suit Against Norman Church

A new divorce complaint in which Mabel Normand, screen comedienne, is named, was filed by Mrs. Georgia W. Church against her millionaire husband, Norman W. Church.

The charges in the present complaint are infidelity and extreme cruelty. Unlike the first action, submitted about a year ago, the new complaint names three women, one of them Mabel Normand. In the original action one woman was named and the sole charge made was unfaithfulness.

A total of \$1,100,000 in community property, exclusive of a valuable estate inherited by her husband from his father, is listed in the suit, which makes the Northway Securities Company co-defendant. The concern is trustee of Mr. Church's estate, and the court is asked to restrain it from disposing of any of the property, which consists of valuable downtown in various industrial corporations.[sic]

Miss Normand entered her husband's life in July and August 1923, Mrs. Church says. He was injured in an automobile accident on July 14, 1923, and was removed to Good Samaritan Hospital. The room he occupied in this institution was next to that in which the screen star was recuperating. They became fast friends, according to the story they told her, Mrs. Church says. He told her when she visited him that Mabel was in the habit of running into his room clad only in a nightgown and to drink liquor with him there. Mrs. Church also names one Esther Bonney and one Gladys MacDougall as co-respondents.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, September 13, 1924

Denial is Voiced By Normand

"I don't know anybody of that name," declared Mabel Normand yesterday when questioned regarding the divorce action against Mrs. Georgia W. Church against Norman W. Church, in which the screen comedienne is named as one of three correspondents.

"If I ever met such a person I can't remember him, but I am sure I never have," she stated.

Illness has affected Mrs. Church's mind, thinks Esther Bonney, now residing in Chicago, and also named as correspondent in the case.

Miss Bonney denied any wrongdoing on her part and defended, also, the good name of Miss Grace MacDougall, the third correspondent named by Church.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, September 13, 1924

Wife Silent On Star's Denial In Divorce

Confronted by denials uttered by Mabel Normand, the film actress, and two other women, all of whom have been named as co-respondents in a divorce complaint filed against Norman W. Church, millionaire, Mrs. Georgia W. Church, complainant, maintained a grim silence today.

"I don't even remember him," Miss Normand declared, in a brief interview. She is suffering from an abscess in one of her ears.

Mrs. Church alleges in her complaint that Church and Miss Normand met while both were patients in the Good Samaritan hospital during July and August of 1923. Church was recovering from an automobile accident and occupied a room adjoining that of the screen star.

Mrs. Church alleged in her complaint that Miss Normand and Church became quite friendly and that on several occasions the actress visited Church's room while attired in her nightgown and drank liquor with him there. She also alleges that Miss Normand sent her husband flowers.

Both Esther Bonney of Chicago and Mrs. H. G. Hotchkiss, formerly Miss Gladys MacDougall, named as co-respondents, denied accusations of misconduct with Church, as alleged by his wife in the complaint.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, September 17, 1924

Mabel Gives Her Version

Mabel Normand, for the first time, gave her version of the incidents which led to her inclusion among those named in the divorce complaint of Mrs. Georgia W. Church, against her husband, Norman W. Church filed recently.

Mrs. Church charged that while her husband was a patient in Good Samaritan Hospital in the summer of 1923 his room was next to the one occupied by Miss Normand, and that the latter was in the habit of paying visits to Mr. Church's room clad only in a nightgown. Mr. Church flatly denies all charges made in his wife's complaint.

Illustrating her story by folding her arms over her chest and about the shoulders to illustrate the position of a patient strapped to insure the knitting of a collar bone -- Miss Normand was suffering from a broken collar bone at the time -- the actress told her story in the office of her attorney, Milton Cohen.

"You see it was this way," she said. "For the whole two weeks I was in the hospital. I was never out of my own bed. It was shortly after I went there that a nurse wheeled a patient in a wheel chair passed the door of my room. He had his hands and arms all drawn up in front of him and, from his position, seemed in some harrowing pain. I could not see the face. My nurse and his exchanged greetings and from that I learned his name was Church.

"One of my doctors introduced me to Mr. Church, and we each wished the other well in our illness, and he was wheeled on.

"The next time I saw Mr. Church was under similar circumstances, three days later, and the next time after that, three days subsequent. But I was always strapped into my apparatus, and as for sending Mr. Church any flowers, good grief, don't he have enough money to buy himself all the flowers in California if he wants to?

"Finally about two days after that, Mr. Church was going home and my nurse said goodby, and I called a cheery goodby, and we each hoped the other a quick recovery. Why, boys, cross my heart. I would not know that man if he were sitting here in this room with us today, listening to me.

"I must deny kissing him, visiting him in my nightgown,"-- here the star burst into a peal of laughter -- "plying the man with anything to drink, or anything at all of that sort, I never saw him without nurses and doctors surrounding us, and I never even saw him any closer than from my bed to the door.

"I don't know what I'm going to do with this case, but I'm going to stop people making me the goat whenever they have any scandal to talk about, or accusation to make."

[following quotes accompany photos included with above piece:]

"I've had too much unfavorable publicity already -- and I assure you I don't like it."

"I've made up my mind that from now on they have got to prove everything they say about me."

"The complaint is sure a surprise to me; and really, I wouldn't know the man again if I saw him."

* from **Photoplay**, October 1924

At last Hollywood has seen Douglas Fairbanks' "The Thief of Bagdad." No picture ever made has been awaited with such eager interest by the film colony itself, and the opening night at Grauman's Hollywood theater was one of those unforgettable occasions, marred only by the absence of Doug and Mary, who were somewhere on the high seas, bound for America.

The scene was an amazing one, from the crowd that packed the streets outside, to the interior of the theater, transformed for the production of this picture into a veritable Arabian Nights palace, filled with incense and Oriental perfumes, magnificent tapestries and rich colors, dancing girls and throbbing Eastern music.

In the audience were Norma Talmadge, Constance Talmadge, Madame Alla Nazimova, with the most fascinating new bob above a frock of gold and coral; Florence Vidor, in cream chiffon with orchids; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Meighan, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Lloyd (Mildred wore the daintiest of Boue Souers frocks under a summer evening wrap of pale pink chiffon du marabou); Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Denny (Mrs. Denny in a smart taffeta frock of blended pastel colors); Mr. and Mrs. Earle Williams, the latter stunning in cloth of gold and flame net; Miss Jeannie MacPherson, wearing a gorgeous evening coat of green silk shot with gold and banded with gold embroidery; Mr. and Mrs. Walter Morosco (Corrine Griffith), Paul Bern, Mabel Normand, all in white satin trimmed with rhinestones under an evening wrap of ermine; Mr. and Mrs. George Archainbaud, Kathleen Clifford, in scalloped white chiffon ornamented with red silken roses; Mae Busch, black and silver; Jack Pickford and Marilyn Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Allan Forrest (Lottie Pickford), Mr. and Mrs. Robert Leonard (Mae Murray--in some shimmering white and silver thing, with a coat of delicate canary yellow); Mr. and Mrs. Norman Kerry, Priscilla Dean, in autumn leaf brown, with a big picture hat of the same color; Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Nagel, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas MacLean, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ray, George Fitzmaurice, Eugene O'Brien and Mr. and Mrs. Monta Bell.

* from **Los Angeles Evening Herald**, October 10, 1924

Miss Normand May Intervene In Divorce

With a suit for \$500,000 damages on file against Mrs. Georgia W. Church, estranged wife of Norman W. Church, a millionaire, Miss Mabel Normand, film celebrity, was preparing today to carry her fight for vindication still further by applying to the court for permission to intervene in Mrs. Church's divorce action.

The \$500,000 suit was based on charges made by Mrs. Church in which she linked her husband's name with that of the film actress and Miss Normand wants to intervene in the divorce action and publicly and legally deny the charges there.

In the divorce complaint Mrs. Church alleged her husband told her that while he was a patient in a local hospital where Miss Normand also was being cared for, that Miss Normand was "accustomed to run in and out of the room attired only in a nightgown." She also had drinks with him in his room. Church told his wife, according to the latter's divorce complaint. Mrs. Church also declared her husband informed her Miss Normand kissed him good-by when he left the hospital.

The allegations were set up in the divorce action as a basis for the cruelty and mental suffering Mrs. Church declared she was caused.

Miss Normand, in her damage action, declared her business as an actress was injured and that the publicity given Mrs. Church's charges has made it unprofitable for her to engage in the making of new films.

* from **Los Angeles Evening Express**, October 10, 1924

\$500,000 Suit Is Started By Miss Normand

Five hundred thousand dollars is the sum asked in a suit filed in the superior court with Mabel Normand, well-known motion picture star, as plaintiff, by Byron C. Hanna, attorney for Miss Normand, and Mrs. Georgia W. Church, wife of Norman W. Church, wealthy clubman as defendant.

Miss Normand claims that her reputation as a motion picture actress has been damaged to such an extent she could not proceed with further production of pictures profitably due to the notoriety attached to having her name linked with that of Church in a divorce action started by Mrs. Church on September 10.

Mrs. Church alleged in her divorce complaint that her husband, a patient at the Good Samaritan hospital at the time Mabel was convalescing from injuries sustained when she fell from a horse at Coronado, was visited by the actress at frequent intervals and that Miss Normand "was accustomed to run in and out of his room attired only in her nightgown and to have drinks with him there."

Mrs. Church's complaint further alleged she was told by her husband after his removal home that Mabel had said that "if he did not keep still she would tell him naughty stories," and that she had implanted a farewell kiss on his lips when he left.

"Miss Normand feels that she has been grievously injured by the publicity given to these charges," the screen star's attorney declared after filing the suit. "Her action in filing the suit against Mrs. Church is an urgent demand for a rigorous judicial investigation of the facts. That Miss Normand seeks such an investigation is in itself an evidence of her innocence and good faith."

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, October 10, 1924

Because of being pictured as a "vamp" in the Church divorce complaint, Miss Normand declares she has not found it "profitable" to undertake production of new films.

The action is based upon a paragraph contained in an amended complaint for divorce filed in Superior Court by Mrs. Church against husband filed Sept. 10.

Norman Church was removed to Good Samaritan hospital occupying room near Mabel Normand's, who was convalescing from injuries suffered when she fell off a horse at Coronado -- allegedly occurred sometime between July and August 1923.

After Church was taken home from the hospital it was charged he told his wife Mabel told him "if he did not keep still she would tell him naughty stories," and that she kissed him good-by and left.

Mabel Normand entered categorical denials of the allegations, but admitted, however, that on two occasions "when properly attired and in the presence of other people," she conversed formally with Church in his room.

By reason of the wide publicity given the Church divorce, the suit asserts a "spirit of resentment" has been aroused against the screen star, especially among those accustomed to patronizing her pictures.

"The plaintiffs reputation as a motion picture star," the complaint declares, "has been damaged to such an extent that she cannot proceed with the production of further pictures profitably."

* from *Los Angeles Evening Herald*, October 10, 1924

In the divorce complaint, Mrs. (Georgia) Church alleged her husband told her that while he was a patient in a local hospital where Miss Normand was also being cared for, that Miss Normand was accustomed to run in and out of the room "attired only in a nightgown." She also had drinks with him in his room. Mrs. Church also declared her husband informed her that Miss Normand kissed him good-by when he left the hospital.

The allegations were set up in the divorce action as a basis for the cruelty and mental suffering Mrs. Church declared she was caused.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1924

Mabel Normand Sues For \$500,000

Mabel Normand, screen luminary, late yesterday filed a libel complaint in Superior Court seeking \$500,000 damages from Georgia W. Church, estranged wife of Norman W. Church, millionaire.

The action filed through Attorney Byron C. Hanna and J. D. Fredericks is based on assertions that Mrs. Church in a divorce complaint against her wealthy husband named Miss Normand in an unsavory manner and thereby damaged the film star's earning capacity in motion pictures.

The plaintiff avers that up to the time of the filing of the Church divorce suit in September, 1923, in which she was named, her name and reputation as a picture actress had been held in high esteem throughout the world, permitting her to derive an annual income in excess of \$150,000; that she was then engaged in preparation for another picture of the first magnitude, but by reason of allegations made against her in the defendants divorce complaint and their dissemination to the public, a spirit of resentment has been aroused "and plaintiff's reputation as a moving picture star has been damaged to such an extent that plaintiff cannot proceed with the production of further pictures profitably."

Excerpts from the divorce petition of Mrs. Church, which are asserted to have damaged Miss Normand's reputation, are quoted in the latter's libel action. The amended complaint was filed on September 15, 1923, and charged infidelity and extreme cruelty. Following is the chief excerpt from Mrs. Church's complaint against Mr. Church, quoted in Miss Normand's action:

"About July 14, 1923, said defendant (Mr. Church) suffered an accident by the overturning of an automobile in which he was traveling near Los Angeles whereby his left hand was severely injured, and to obtain treatment for such injury he became an inmate of the Good Samaritan Hospital at the City of Los Angeles.

"While defendant was receiving treatment in said Good Samaritan Hospital in July and August, 1923, because of said injury to his hand, there was a woman patient in the said hospital of the name of Mabel Normand. She occupied a room in such hospital near to the room occupied by defendant and defendant informed plaintiff when she visited him at said hospital during his said stay there that the said Mabel Normand was then accustomed to run in and out of his room attired, as to her outer garments, only in her nightgown and to have drinks with him there; and the defendant showed to the plaintiff flowers in his room which he said were brought or sent to him by said Mabel Normand, and afterward when defendant had left said hospital and returned to his residence about the middle of

August, 1923, he informed plaintiff that Mabel had told him that if he did not keep still she would tell him naughty stories and that she kissed him good-by on his departure from the hospital."

Miss Normand's complaint asserts that the language of the quotations were intended by Mrs. Church to mean that the film star had conducted herself in an unseemly manner toward Mr. Church, and that, on information and belief, Miss Normand believes the allegations quoted, inserted in the Church divorce suit, were for the purpose of defaming her. The star makes a complete denial of the incidents asserted to have occurred at Good Samaritan Hospital.

Coincident with the filing of the libel complaint, the attorney's for Miss Normand filed an application requesting permission to intervene in the Church divorce case asking a hearing so that the court may determine the truth of allegations Mrs. Church is asserted to have made concerning Miss Normand.

Attorney Hanna also issued the following statement in Miss Normand's behalf:

"The charges contained in Mrs. Church's complaint so far as any misconduct is imputed to Miss Normand are wholly and absolutely false.

"Miss Normand feels that she has been grievously injured by the publicity given to these charges and especially so in view of the fact that her pictures have always been exactly clean and wholesome.

"After years of constructive work in this class of motion pictures, she has determined that her name shall not be used as a football in the Church divorce case. Miss Normand is determined to avail herself of every legal means at her command to establish her innocence.

"Her action in filing a libel suit against Mrs. Church and in seeking to intervene in the Church divorce case is an urgent demand for a rigorous judicial investigation is in itself an evidence of her innocence and good faith.

"This community has greatly profited by the business of motion-picture interests in its programs. Miss Normand has been foremost among those who have done their part in promoting the welfare of Los Angeles."

Efforts last night to communicate with Mrs. Church in regard to the libel suit were unsuccessful. William J. Hunsaker of the firm of Hunsaker, Britt & Congreve said in her behalf:

"Mrs. Church has no statement to make. She is out of the city."

* from *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1924

Statement About Suit By Actress

Mabel Normand, film actress, yesterday issued a statement setting forth her reasons for instituting suit for \$500,000 damages against Georgia Church, who named the actress in a divorce action against Norman Church. Miss Normand's suit was filed during the past week. She denied the charges contained in Mrs. Church's suit.

"There is a limit to all human endurance and I have reached mine," Miss Normand declared. She further stated that it has been the practice of motion picture people to let charges against them go unanswered "because they consider it far better to let them pass unnoticed than to commence action to vindicate themselves."

She also declared that as other film celebrities seem reluctant to challenge those making such charges, she has decided to become the pioneer.

"I have remained silent through all sorts of accusations and lies," she stated. "In trying to protect the reputation of others I have foolishly allowed my own future to be jeopardized until now I have made up my mind to protect myself."

Regarding the use of her name by Mrs. Church in the latter's divorce complaint Miss Normand declared it was "more than I can stand." She stated she felt that she owed it to herself, her family, friends and motion-picture public to demand an investigation of the charges.

She concludes with the statement that she is "sure that the great American public to whom I owe my success, will sanction my action in insisting on an investigation of these charges, and I am equally assured that they understand how I have been made to suffer innocently of late."

* from *Los Angeles Times*, October 22, 1924

Normand Case Ruling Delayed

The motion of Mabel Normand, motion-picture actress, to intervene in the divorce suit of Georgia W. Church against Norman W. Church, capitalist, was taken under advisement yesterday by Judge Shaw of Superior Court.

Miss Normand filed her motion in connection with a suit for \$500,000 damages for asserted libel she instituted against Mrs. Church as a result of the divorce suit.

The actress based her suit for libel on the ground her reputation had been damaged by an allegation made in Mrs. Church's amended complaint, stating that Church had informed his wife Miss Normand was accustomed to run in and out of his room, attired, as to her outer garments, only in her nightgown," while he and Miss Normand were patients in near-by rooms at the Good Samaritan Hospital last July. The amended complaint also set forth that Church told his wife Miss Normand informed him she would "tell him naughty stories if he did not keep still," and further, that Miss Normand kissed him upon his departure from the hospital.

Miss Normand filed an affidavit in connection with her motion to intervene in the divorce suit, in which she asserted she was deriving an income of \$150,000 a year from her work in motion pictures prior to the filing by Mrs. Church of her amended complaint. Owing to the publicity she received in connection with the case, Miss Normand said, it is now impossible for her profitably to continue with the production of pictures. She asked permission to file an answer to the allegation around which her libel suit against Mrs. Church revolves.

Byron C. Hanna, of counsel for Miss Normand, argued in behalf of the motion, stating his client's reputation was at stake in the divorce case and pleading with the court to give her the opportunity to file an answer and clear herself.

Mrs. Church was represented at the hearing by Attorney W. J. Hunsaker of the firm Hunsaker, Britt and Cosgrove.

Hunsaker opposed the motion to intervene, stating Miss Normand had nothing of direct interest in the divorce proceeding and arguing that Mrs. Church had made no charge against the actress. The allegation mentioning Miss Normand, the attorney said, was based on what Mrs. Church stated her husband told her of the asserted affair.

Church was represented by Attorney Gurney Newlin, who stated that while Miss Normand might have been injured by the allegation in the divorce complaint, he agreed with Hunsaker that Miss Normand had no direct interest in the divorce action.

In view of the broad interpretation that might be given the statutes concerning intervention in such a case, Judge Shaw said he wished more time in which to go into the matter and ordered the case submitted.

* from *Photoplay*, November 1924

" Herbert Howe

...It is a fallacy to suppose that praise ever ingratiates the artist. I panned "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," explaining as I did so that I had met Mabel Normand for the first day the picture was shown; hence everything else dwindled into insignificance. Rex Ingram told me later that he thought I was a fool but at least I had a mind of my own. We became the best of friends, as fools will.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, November 15, 1924

Miss Normand Suit Fails

Mabel Normand, screen actress, yesterday lost her fight to intervene in the divorce suit brought by Georgia W. Church against her millionaire husband, Norman W. Church. Judge Shaw of Superior Court handed down an opinion holding Miss Normand had no direct interest under the law, in the outcome of the divorce action.

Miss Normand had asked the right to intervene in the case for the purpose of clearing her name of an allegation set forth in the complaint in which Mrs. Church stated her husband had informed her Miss Normand had visited him in his room in a local hospital attired as to her outer clothes, only in her night-gown. The allegation further recited that Church had told his wife Miss Normand had given him flowers, indulged in drinks with him and threatened to tell him stories unless he kept quiet.

Miss Normand filed her motion to intervene in connection with a suit for \$500,000 damages for asserted slander she brought against Mrs. Church as a result of the divorce suit. It was stated Judge Shaw's decision in the matter of her right to intervene will in no way affect the legal status of her slander suit against Mrs. Church.

Asking that the slander suit be dismissed by the court, Mrs. Church late yesterday filed a demurrer to the action in Superior Court. Mrs. Church stated the complaint of Miss Normand did not contain facts sufficient to constitute a cause of action against her. The demurrer will be placed on the calendar for hearing in Judge Crump's court and if sustained will necessitate Miss Normand filing either an amended complaint or dropping her suit.

If the demurrer is overruled, Mrs. Church will have to file an answer to the suit, which will then be set for trial by Presiding Judge York.

Attorney's Fredericks and Hanna, counsel for the actress, had prepared a proposed answer of Miss Normand to the divorce suit, in which she denied the substance of the "allegation she objected" to the divorce case. She will not be able to file this answer under the opinion of Judge Shaw.

The Court's opinion was based on the fact that the allegation in the divorce complaint did not charge Miss Normand with having done any of the things of which Church was asserted to have told his wife and that the allegation was set forth properly in the complaint only on the "theory that the mere mention of the matters by the husband to the wife disturbed the wife's peace of mind."

Judge Shaw held in his opinion that Miss Normand's interest in the outcome of the divorce case was not direct and immediate as constructed by the law, which stated that the interest which entitles one to intervene must be of such a character that he or she will either gain or lose by the direct legal operation and effect of the judgment.

The opinion, in part, stated:

"It is manifest that under the rule established by these authorities (Supreme Court decisions) Mabel Normand has no such interest as entitles her to intervene in this action. Her interest is not in the success or failure of either party, but in the suppression of certain unfavorable publicity which she has received by reason of the pleadings in the case."

In her slander suit, Miss Normand charged she was unable to proceed further with the profitable production of motion pictures after the publicity she received in connection with the Church divorce suit. She stated that prior to the publication of newspaper stories concerning the divorce case she had been a star of the first magnitude and had enjoyed a position of prominence in her profession throughout the civilized world.

Mrs. Church was represented in all the proceedings by Attorneys Hunsaker, Britt, and Cosgrove.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, November 20, 1924

Mabel Loses Libel Tilt

Mabel Normand, motion-picture actress lost the second round in her fight to clear her name of an allegation made in the divorce suit of Mrs. Georgia W. Church against her millionaire husband, Norman Church, when Judge Shaw of Superior Court sustained a demurrer to the suit for \$500,000 damages brought by Miss Normand against Mrs. Church.

Byron C. Hanna, attorney for Miss Normand, stated he would make no application to amend the libel complaint in Superior Court, but would yield the case to the State Supreme Court. It was stipulated by Mr. Hanna and William J. Hunsaker, counsel for Mrs. Church, that the court order sustaining Mrs. Church's demurrer should be entered without leave to amend.

Last week Judge Shaw also ruled against Miss Normand in denying her motion to intervene and file an answer in the Church divorce suit. The points on law involved in both cases were extremely technical, and being of a similar nature, all parties concerned in the cases were said to be willing the actions be carried to the higher tribunal for a ruling. Attorney Hanna also said he would appeal from the judgment denying Miss Normand the right to intervene in the divorce suit.

The allegation to which Miss Normand objected was set forth in the divorce complaint as one of a long list of asserted acts of cruelty Church was said to have committed against his wife.

In the complaint, Mrs. Church stated her husband had told her Miss Normand entered his room in a local hospital clad only in her nightgown, gave him flowers, had drinks with him and threatened to tell him “naughty” stories if “he did not keep quiet.”

In asking that she be allowed to clear her name of the allegations, Miss Normand stated she had been a motion-picture actress of first magnitude, but due to the publicity attendant the filing of the divorce case, she had since found it impossible to produce pictures at a profit.

In ruling against Miss Normand, Judge Shaw interpreted the law as holding she had no direct interest in the case, therefore she was not entitled to intervene. In the ruling on Mrs. Church’s demurrer to the libel suit, the court substantiated and upheld the argument of Attorney Hunsaker that Mrs. Church acted within her privileged right in setting forth the allegations to which Miss Normand objected.

It was pointed out that Mrs. Church did not make any direct charges against Miss Normand, that she merely set forth what she declared Church told her as an instance of asserted cruelty. In view of this, the court held, Miss Normand had no legal right to ask libel damages of Mrs. Church.

* from *Photoplay*, December 1924

” Herbert Howe

If I could tell the truth without hurting Mabel Normand further I would prove to you that she has suffered at the hands of penny-a-word writers worse than anyone ever suffered before the Inquisition. The greatness of Mabel Normand will never be known until death releases it. When the cruelest blow of her life was dealt her through a false interview, one which was fabricated without one single comma of truth, she wept bitterly for days. Yet through her tears she never once condemned the writer. She only would day over and over again, as she said to me, “If they only knew what they do...If they only knew, they would never do it.”

* from *Movie Times*, no.179, Dec. 1, 1924

· *The following ad translated from Japanese*

The Temporary Maid [the Extra Girl]

This film was widely acclaimed in Tokyo.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, December 11, 1924

Mabel Normand Recovers

Mabel Normand has been confined to her home during the past two weeks, suffering from tonsillitis. She went out yesterday for the first time in a fortnight.

The comedienne’s admirers will be delighted to know that she is shortly to return to the screen. Though she has no announcement to make at this time, she will probably be able to state her plans within a few weeks. She has several offers, and it is just possible she may play a big dramatic part. However, as it is the rollicking Mabel the public loves, it is likely that she will stick to this line of parts.

1925

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 19, 1925

Mabel Normand Tells Future Plans

When Mabel Normand’s ship comes in she’s going to--

Turn it right around and start it back over the waters without keeping any of its precious cargo for herself, at all, and--

She’s going to bob her hair and--

She hopes some day to be a magazine illustrator.

Miss Normand has had an exhilarating past; she revels in the present, but it is in the future in which she is chiefly interested.

And the fairies by way of the tea leaves and Mamie [Owens], have told Miss Normand that her ship is coming in. Her lawyers tell her the same thing, but she puts more faith in the fairies and Mamie.

Mamie is the tall, silver-haired, motherly and thoroughly efficient maid who has been with Miss Normand for so many years. And she tells the most delightful fortunes by means of tea leaves.

Of course, there’s a secretary and a woman companion and a Chow dog, but after all, Mamie is closer to Miss Normand than anybody else in the household, for Mamie is Irish, too.

No girl in motion pictures has been more subjected so the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune than has Mabel Normand, but she’s never yet “thrown a dead cat into anybody else’s backyard.”

In fact, today she’s the same lovable “Molly-O,” the same captivating “Mickey,” the same laughable “Susanna,” of five years ago. The screen’s first and most artistic tomboy has remained very much of a little girl.

“Julia gave them to me for Christmas,” she explained yesterday of a pair of silver mules, “because they fit her.

“Everything I have around this house fits somebody else.

“Mamie,” she squalls toward the rear of the house, and the quiet, clear-eyed and altogether interesting Irish woman comes in.

“Mamie, will you make the gentleman some tea? And, Mamie, will you tell your fortunes?”

“Maybe the gentlemen won’t care for tea,” Mamie demurs.

Mamie is something more than a maid. She’s somewhat of a mind-reader.

“Mamie, if you don’t tell our fortunes I’ll bob my hair.”

The fortunes are told.

And, somehow, Mamie says the tea leaves show. Miss Normand is going to receive \$500,000.

“What are you going to do with all the money?” Miss Normand is asked.

"I'm going to establish The Mabel Normand Foundation for Indigent Newspaper Reporters," she replies.
"But seriously," she continued, "I'm going to give it away to people who need it more than I do. And there won't be any broadcasting about it, either. I'll just do it and nobody will know anything about it except the people who get it and me."

The \$500,000, Miss Normand says, is coming from a lawsuit she has filed against Mrs. Georgia W. Church, who brought sensational charges against Miss Normand in her suit for divorce against her husband, Norman W. Church.

She was awarded a divorce decree last Thursday.

Mrs. Church amended her complaint against her husband leaving out all the charges against Miss Normand, thus depriving the film comedian of a chance to clear her name in court.

"I was in the hospital with a collarbone and one arm fractured as the result of an automobile accident when Mrs. Church alleges all these things happened, I was all tied up like a sore thumb and the only way I would have been able to get around would have been to swing from the chandeliers with my teeth.

"Mrs. Church has admitted that her charges against me were unfounded and untrue," Miss Normand continued. "I don't want her money for myself but I do want a chance to clear my name in court."

Miss Normand has not quit motion pictures although she is not yet ready to announce definite plans for her cinema future.

Miss Normand still hopes to be an artist with paints and brushes. She goes every evening to a class at the University of Southern California where she studies sketching and piano.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 17, 1925

Mabel Normand Files Appeal in Damage Action

Mabel Normand filed an appeal in the Supreme Court yesterday from recent Superior Court decisions, denying her right to intervene in the divorce suit of Mrs. Georgia W. Church against Norman W. Church, and dismissing her suit for \$500,000 damages against Mrs. Church. The papers were prepared by Fredericks and Hanna.

Miss Normand asserted her good name had been impugned by Mrs. Church's complaint, in which the latter declared her husband and Miss Normand had been very friendly when both were inmates of the Good Samaritan Hospital in 1923, that Miss Normand entered his room in her nightgown, gave him drinks and flowers and kissed him good-by on his departure. The actress denies any such actions.

* from clipping dated February 25, 1925, origin unknown, found in Mack Sennett papers

Herbert Howe, the critic, always insists, however, that the one great genius the screen has known is Mabel Normand. And I am inclined to think this is true. Mabel never appears in a picture that she does not leave an unfavorable impression. Who will ever forget her walking along the hot road in 'Suzanna,' or some of the scenes in 'Mickey'?

Mabel Normand has without a doubt the most original mind and the most individual method of any screen actress.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 20, 1925

Mabel Normand is under negotiations with Tiffany-Truant Pictures, under Phil Goldstone, to make picture called "Sheila," based on novel of that name.

* from *Lincoln Sunday State Journal* [Nebraska], March 22, 1925

Reports from Los Angeles indicate that Charles Chaplin is in some circles being placed in the same social category with Roscoe Arbuckle and Mabel Normand. The women's clubs of southern California, it is said, have protested to the management of the Grauman theater in Los Angeles against showing "The Gold Rush," the comedian's new picture. At any rate the booking has been changed to Fox's "The Iron Horse," which has had a long, successful showing in New York.

* from *The Daily Northwestern* [Oshkosh, Wisconsin], April 27, 1925

Mabel Normand has popularized the study of French at the university of Southern California.

The screen actress has enrolled for an advanced course in the romance language, and the class is one of the most popular on the campus.

She is an excellent student, according to her instructors.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, May 7, 1925

Mabel Normand Denies Rumored Screen Return

Mabel Normand is tired of having her return to the screen announced by everybody but herself.

So she declared yesterday in denying the latest report that she is to do a picture for I. E. Chadwick under the direction of Larry Semon.

"I have received many offers from Mr. Chadwick and if he came to my terms I might sign. But he hasn't and I haven't," Mabel said yesterday. "I have read the story he proposes and like it, but I also have other plans and I don't know what I will do.

"If I did do a picture, however," she declared, "I would like very much to have Mr. Semon direct it."

Chadwick, who also has under contract Theda Bara, Larry Semon and Charles Ray, denied yesterday he had given out anything about Mabel returning to the screen with him.

"I would like to have her, but we haven't signed anything," he said.

Mabel declared she has had a number of offers, but is not ready to accept any of them.

* from *Photoplay*, June 1925

" Herbert Howe

MABEL NORMAND: Comedy playing Tragedy, directed by Fate. The heart of the world in pain. Love of neighbor crucified by neighbor. An Inevitable. A genius.

* from *Photoplay*, June 1925

Mabel Normand has been graduated from pictures into the University of California, where she is taking an advanced course in French.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, June 9, 1925

Film Star Signs For New Play

Another star has been lured from the screen to the stage, reversing the usual order of procedure. A. H. Woods, famous New York producer, announced yesterday that he had signed Mabel Normand under a five-year contract to appear in a new comedy on the speaking stage. The play, as yet unnamed, is being written by Otto Harbach, author of the three greatest musical comedy hits of the past season, "Kid Boots," "Rose Marie" and "No, No, Nanette," and will open at the Ritz Theater, New York City, August 27, next.

For several days the famous New York manager has been stopping at the Ambassador and curiosity as to the reason for his visit to the West Coast has been increasing, with many rumors flying. His announcement revealed for his long journey to Los Angeles.

In Mabel Normand, Mr. Woods feels that he has a comedienne who will be a tremendous success on the speaking stage. Her talent for making people laugh will unquestionably be just as potent on the stage as on the picture screen.

Miss Normand will be starred in the new play and will go east shortly to commence rehearsal. It seems retributive justice that after the pictures have been stealing stars away from the theater for many years, the stage should now begin to garner them in again from the screen. Other recent converts to the stage from the movies are Taylor Holmes and Pauline Frederick and there is a well-founded rumor that one or two big screen favorites are turning a willing ear to the overtures of New York Theatrical producers.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 1925

Mabel Normand Leaves to Begin New York Season

Showers with bouquets and wreaths of flowers from admiring friends, Mabel Normand, film comedienne, left here yesterday aboard the Santa Fe for New York, where she will be starred in some new plays under the supervision of A. H. Woods, New York producer. Miss Normand's contract is said to call for more than \$2,000,000 in the next five years, which will include both stage and motion-picture income.

Accompanying her east were Warren J. Lemon, former manager of the Playhouse, his wife Ruth Lee, an actress, and Miss Julia Brew, a friend of the comedienne. Mr. Lemon will manage Miss Normand's new production. For several years he was a manager of various eastern companies.

Miss Normand's first play will be a comedy adapted from French by Otto Harbach.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 1925

" Grace Kingsley

"I don't know," said Stella, "how in the world Mabel can bear to leave this lovely house!"

Stella and I had gone down to Mabel Normand's beautiful new Beverly Hills home²¹² to attend the very last party she gave before going back to New York.

But Mabel was quite calm about it -- she said she was so delighted to be going to work on the stage in a charming play -- so interested in a new professional enterprise -- that she didn't mind at all. Of course, she isn't going to rent the place, it is quite lovely to allow strangers in to handle its tapestries and linens and curtains, or to run the risk of the unappreciative person knocking corners off exquisite old pieces of antique furniture or breaking priceless china.

"Why," whispered Stella, "it would be exactly like renting one's grandmother, wouldn't it?"

"Or at least one's aunt by marriage!" I agreed.

The house is built in the Moorish style, and there is the very loveliest garden in the back, surrounded by a high wall, and fitted up with wicker furniture. Pola and Rod La Rocque were walking there -- which did some way seem entirely appropriate -- and Rod seemed to be trying to make up with Pola.

"But I don't think he is having much success!" confided Stella.

Just about everyone was there at Mabel's party. Lou Tellegen came in, but without his beautiful wife, who, he explained was working that evening. Hobart Henley came along, too, but was quite vampireless for once. Perhaps he came alone as a rather delicate compliment to Mabel. They are old friends, you know, Mabel kidded him about the time they played together in a picture, long ago, and Hobart tried to steal the show, backing her up while he faced the camera. He took it gallantly, though.

Mabel looked lovely in a white georgette gown over silk, trimmed with brilliance. Nobody can teach Mabel a thing about hostessing. She is so stimulating! Besides being sweetly hospitable just interested in everything about everybody, and as observing as a lookout aviator in a forest reservation, she knows just how to keep everybody going. But so unobtrusively. All the same, if she finds you getting a bit dull, she will address some lively little remark to you that stirs you to retort and makes you, as Stella elegantly expressed it, get next to yourself!

Bessie Love was there and danced for us.

Kenneth Harlan was out for the first time since he underwent his operation four or five weeks before Marie Prevost, his wife, said she was delighted to be going about again. You see, she practically gave up all her work and social activities to take care of Kenneth while he was recuperating. Kenneth looked very handsome and interesting.

Marie wore a pale pink georgette evening gown, with, of course, a waistline.

²¹² Mabel had moved into her new abode in May 1925.

Charlie Ray and his wife were there and Mrs. Ray looked as charmingly dressed as ever. The flounces of her dress were trimmed with big yellow petals -- as though they had fallen there gracefully from some plant in the garden. It was such a pretty effect. Her bob was a boyish one, except for two little poster curls just in front of her ears.

Speaking of bobs, they are growing closer and closer. Kathlyn Williams wore a floating bob -- one of those lovely, heavenly things that makes a sort of halo around one's face. She looked very pretty. Bessie Love looks like a choir boy in her close bob, and Pola Negri looks like one of these cute Japanese dolls in her Dutch bob.

Even Bess Meredyth is close-bobbed these days, and says that she wouldn't unbob for anything!

Paul Bern and Ernest Lubitsch, along with Hobart Henley, helped uphold the directorial dignity of the occasion, and Mack Sennett furnished the comedy relief.

Mrs. Lubitsch was there, looking like a movie queen herself.

"Every time I see her," said Stella. "I think -- 'Who is that movie star?' Then I remember she is just a regular lady without professional aspirations."

* from *Photoplay*, September 1925

...Elinor Glyn expressed to me an interesting theory the other day.

"Some day you will see that something beautiful and fine will come to that girl. [Mabel Normand] She will rise above all the bad luck and all the misfortunes that have pursued her. She will even rise above her own inner enemies, those enemies of the spirit which we all have to destroy.

"I believe that when anyone always thinks kind and good thoughts towards other, always returns loving thoughts even toward those who do them injury, they are bound in the end to find happiness and success.

"I do not know Miss Normand at all. But everyone who speaks of her says the same thing -- that she is kindness itself, always speaking well of everyone and always thinking gentle and understanding thoughts of them in her heart. They say that she never tries to hurt another and is never envious of another's success.

"These things are the finest virtues and in the end will overcome all evils of this world and of the flesh. You will see that she will have a rich reward at some time."

We hope she's right.

* from *Variety*, September 9, 1925

The Little Mouse

Asbury Park, Sept. 4

A. H. Woods presents Mabel Normand in "The Little Mouse," farce by Otto Harbach. Week of Aug. 31, at Long Branch and Asbury Park.

The star has but very little to do in this not unamusing farce.

It is one of those things in which an industrious lawyer becomes after 8 o'clock a gay Lothario and easy mark for a pretty face. The lines are as broad as they are long. This being a typical example, "Got anything on tonight," and the answer, "Nothing I can't get out of."

It has been a season of farce. This one can not be placed very high on the list. It is as broad as any, but not as subtle, nor as new. All the old tricks are introduced and are greeted with the welcome always extended old friends.

* from *Washington Times*, September 8, 1925

Mabel Normand And Splendid Cast

While a middling number of traps and paris green baits are probably lurking in the pathway of "The Little Mouse," there is no denying that it may avoid them all and win through to a Broadway run...

...Mabel Normand seems to put rather a tentative foot upon the stage. Not that her work is not very good, but that there's rather little of it. About ten minutes to each act seems to be the limit to Miss Mabel's appearances. And only in the second act, is she given the opportunity to cut loose with what might be regarded as the typical "Normand stuff," when she does a brief and very alcoholic war danced on an overly stuffed divan. Her appearances in the first and last acts are absolutely devitalized and conventional bits. The Normand speaking voice, which we have all been wondering about, is pretty and a little throaty, but not very flexible which is hardly to be wondered at. From a pictorial standpoint, the Normand is quite gorgeous. She makes her debut in a postery effect of orange velvet and white fox that absolutely eclipses everything else in sight.

The supporting cast assembled for Miss Normand comes very nearly being superlative...

..."The Little Mouse," presentation last night could hardly be called a premiere, since the play has been produced at least twice before under different names. Perhaps this accounts for the smoothness and quick tempo of last night's performance. There in no "dead" dialogue or slow movement in the show, whatever its other shortcomings. If "The Little Mouse" should pass away untimely, which the higher powers portend, it will hardly be the fault of either producer or cast and the services of the play surgeon will be superfluous. - M.H.

* from *Washington Times*, September 11, 1925

" Harold Phillips

History of the life, times and customs of a play called "The Little Mouse."

Originally taken from German sources, but credited to a mythical French boulevardier named Alphonse Poiret. Adapted for American purposes by Walter De Leon and produced as "Lonely Wives." This seems as far back as the McKinley election, but, actually, it was no such thing.

Rewritten by Martin Brown as a comedy and titled "Naughty Diana." No go.

Rewritten a third time as a musical comedy and titled "Naughty Diana;" by which time the names of the original composers, lyric writers, idea suggestors, revampers and such were forgotten and no one was credited with anything.

Sam Shipman, meanwhile, attempts a face-lifting operation on the original piece and succeeds only in making it look like an early morning's catch in Bellevue. This version never was produced, but Shipman nursed it with a lonely and abiding sorrow. What a man!

Came the dawn and Otto Harbach. The genial Otto seems to have attired himself in a fireman's helmet and a loose-fitting axe, and slashed something and titled it "Loose Moments." Due to the high tide, choppy sea or the wrong kind of bait, the fish weren't biting.

Taking off his fireman's helmet and substituting for it a Maharajah's toga and a scimitar of unreasonable heft, Mr. Harbach again advanced upon the bruised and bleeding script and after enfilading it from both flanks, the rear, the fore and from above, he was able to pummel it into sufficient submissiveness to permit of its being issued anew as "Oh Madeline." This brings us to the Nordic age and the eve of the never-to-be-forgotten Tacna-Arica dispute. Hardly a man is still alive.

As "Oh Madeline" the piece premiered at the Belasco a year ago. It had its moments and also its endless hours. Producer Woods couldn't see the hours for the moments so when public apathy pricked it into a state of collapse, Mr. Woods still had fell designs on the script and the populace.

Our heroine retires to a cloister and is heard from only now and anon singing from the balcony of her humble refuge. She is known to a paltry few as "Diana of the Movies."

As "Diana of the Movies" she shows signs of regeneration and penitence and Producer Woods promises her one more chance to commingle with the watts and forthwith, in the fall of 1925, she engages residence at Poli's Theater as "The Little Mouse," as meek and humble a little creature as ever you'd want to see.

If Mr. Woods ever finds a play for the comedic talents of the throaty Normand, it will not be "The Little Mouse." Indeed, if he finds a play at all for her. Due time must be allowed, of course, for Miss Normand to forget the studied gaggeries of the Mack Sennett school and for her sudden transition from the lot to the stage.

The committee having met and voted to allow this time to elapse, it is still the consensus that the Normand talents are not fitted for the audible art. She has plenty that an actress should not have and practically nothing of the attributes of a star. A role that should be, if it's to be anything at all, light giddy and vivacious, is throttled by her totally inept handling of it. It is too bad that this pretty pony, with undeniable screen talents, should be harnessed to a worn-out shay for her debut in the stage derby. The combination of mediocre talent, interpreting a bad play, is something that even the laying on of hands and the anointments of the faithful, cannot save. The signs are against the play having a vestige of success. Where the recrimination will fall, heaven only knows; there has been such a multitude of cooks teasing the broth.

It seems to me that Miss Normand will be the real loser. She is a sort of sacrifice to Mr. Woods stubborn faith in a piece of,

Shall we say baloney?

For Mr. Woods there is this much to be said at the moment: His confidence in his products, large as it is, is no larger nor broader than his pocketbook.

There must be somewhere a synthetic paradise for men who nourish futile hopes on the expenditure of hard, cold cash. We may withhold applause from his product, but we cannot but admire his spartan waste of doubloons to bring out that product.

* from *Providence* Evening Bulletin (R.I.), September 23, 1925
[advertisement for The Outlet Company]

Mabel Normand
The Celebrated Screen Star
Now Playing at the
Providence Opera House
in "The Little Mouse"
and
Fritzi Brunette
1st National Screen Star
Now Playing at Fay's Theatre

**Will be at our store
IN PERSON
To-morrow to Greet Their Admirers
From 3:30 to 4:30 P.M.**

Reception will be held in our Women's Garment Store, 2nd Floor

* from *Providence* Evening Bulletin (R.I.), September 23, 1925

A. H. Woods presents Mabel Normand in "The Little Mouse," a farce from the French of Alphonse Poiret, by Otto Harbach; staged by Norman Houston, with the following cast:

Kitty Hayden.....Ruth Lee
Andrews.....Spencer Charters
Mrs. Mantell.....Isabel O'Madigan
Musette.....Gaby Fleury
Richard Smith.....Russell Mack
Molly O'Dare.....Mabel Normand
Felix Farrell (Zero).....Byron Hawkins
Madeline Smith.....Allyn King
A Taxi Driver.....William McFadden

There is a faint suggestion of her movie triumphs of yesteryear in the way Mabel Normand (herself — not a picture) disports, contorts and flip-flops her way through a few moments when "The Little Mouse" resembles more an uproarious burlesque of the screen than one of those entre-actes at Le Grand Guignol, Paris.

For the rest she is a slightly wistful figure in the rush of a smart-spoken; sophisticated and commendably acted farce of unquestionably French pedigree, which boasts two delicious comediennes in the persons of Miss Lee and Miss King, the later late of the "Follies;" and a pair of ace-high farceurs in Messrs. Mack and Charters.

"The Little Mouse" is a more subtle affair than one is wont to associate with Mr. Woods. The bedroom is kept strictly in the background for the entire duration of the play. It's there, of course, but quite decently subordinated to a pleasant living room, where misunderstandings, mistaken identities and double entendres follow one another's heels in haste and hilarity.

There are lines like -- "I knew she was French, but I thought she had it under control" -- and, when someone has fainted and the suggestion is made that she be given air -- "Will I take her out to it or bring it in to her?" -- disarming, facile lines, striking like lightning for the thunder of applause.

The spectacle of Andrews, the family butler, vacillating between the contradictory commands of Richard Smith and Mr. Zero, who has impersonated Smith at home while the latter has a night out, is richly amusing. Zero's struggle to withstand the amorous advances of Mrs. Smith, returned unexpectedly, and believing him to be her husband, is in keeping with the best traditions of the French humorists...His struggle, his voluptuous submission, at length, to her clinging embrace...Smith's obsession to know what has actually taken place during his absence. Suspense, relieved by an interlude of gun play and one of those room to room chases, featured by sudden leapings, indicative of direct hits in a vulnerable portion of the human chassis...Movie stuff, this, with Miss Normand feeling quite at home for its duration.

Richard Smith was a criminal lawyer until 8 p.m. After that he was just a criminal, with a penchant for other men's wives. He had been dictating letters furiously to his new and charming stenographer, Kitty Hayden, when the witching hour tinkled, releasing his subconscious self, or whatever it is that makes you do what you want to instead of what you ought.

Kitty was acquiescent, not to say eagerly amenable to the suggestion of a rendezvous at El Fay (is it padlocked yet) at 10 o'clock that night. But meanwhile, having sensed Richard's weakness pour les dames, Kitty has phoned Molly O'Dare on the q.t. that here is the bird who will arrange her divorce for the paltry guerdon of a smile...

Meanwhile, the avenue of escape for Richard, barred by the substantial person of his mother-in-law (who wants to hear "the patter of little feet" around the house, but can't seem to make her son-in-law warm to the idea of such a conventional consequence of marriage) is opened by the advent of a vaudeville impersonator, who promises to double for Richard while he sallies forth, on condition he may henceforth list the renowned criminal lawyer as one of his characterizations in the "two-a-day."

Molly, hot on the trail of her divorce, arrives in time to accompany Richard and Kitty to the El Fay. What happens there and subsequently is left to the (by this time lively) imagination of the audience. Suffice it to say that while what is going on is going on between Richard and Molly, something quite as provocative of speculation is going on at Richard's domicile where Mrs. Mantell, his mother-in-law, has locked the door on Richard's ravishing wife and vanquished Zero.

We would withhold the important information that Molly proves to be no other than Zero's wife, if you hadn't guessed it already. There's nothing original about that or about the fact that as soon as she informs the dear he may have developed more than a platonic interest in Mrs. Smith, she loses all desire to divorce him. That, in a woman, is supposed to be logical, we believe. Well, anyhow, "The Little Mouse" provides an amusing evening, with the honors going to Mr. Mack, Mr. Charters (the best stage butler we ever saw); Miss King and Miss Lee.

It's only fair to mention, however, that Miss Normand's feet, at times, are almost eloquent.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, September 26, 1925

Mabel Normand to Tour

Mabel Normand is going to see America first. That is, she is going to see and be seen from coast to coast of our fair land before New York gets a peep at her. We mean professionally, of course. "The Little Mouse" is going to be sent on tour with Miss Normand starring, and Los Angeles audiences will have a chance to welcome her in the new play before ever the blasé New York critics get a chance to tell what, if anything, is wrong with the play.

A. H. Woods, according to information just received, has booked Miss Normand and "The Little Mouse" on a route that will take her across the country. She will not play Chicago, however, but starting at Brooklyn, will play Philadelphia, Baltimore, Providence and thence points west.

* from *Variety*, September 30, 1925

Mabel Normand Disappointed By Failure of "The Little Mouse"

A woman reached New York Sunday about as disappointed as one could ever be over the flop of a show that failed to reach Broadway. That was Mabel Normand, film comedienne, who had been out on a preliminary road tour in "The Little Mouse." Miss Normand is said to have blamed the show for its failure to click. A check up of the writers on the different papers during the four weeks and two days the show was out told a different story.

In almost every town where the show opened, the first night was noticeably off in receipts, a fact which surprised the A. H. Woods office, which produced the Normand play. The factors in that New York sanctum felt reasonably sure that Miss Normand, by reason of her picture popularity would prove a draw.

It is understood that Woods is not planning to place Miss Normand in another show as the prime figure although if remaining under his managerial wing she may be assigned to some show that has regularly ascribed legitimate "names."

The show opened in Stamford and closed in Providence. Only two changes were made in the cast after the show left its rehearsal hall. After the second week Alice Hegeman and Marie Adele withdrew their places filled by Ruth Lee and Isabella O'Madigan.

* from *Movie Magazine*, October 1925

...Wallace MacDonald used to be one of the old Keystone cops and it was during this time that he first came to know and appreciate the little Irish girl whose own life has turned out so differently from the comedy she portrays on the screen.

"Mabel is a person you never forget," he began. "She is probably the most impetuous girl in the world--always up to some prank. It is no wonder that she sometimes finds herself in difficulties. It is to be expected that she will always be misunderstood.

"I remember one time in the old Keystone days when Mack Sennett made a trip to New York. He wired the studio manager that he would return at a certain hour of a certain day.

"And Mabel, knowing that he expected everyone to be on hand to greet him, had all of us hide in the rafters of the main building. From this point we could observe him without being seen.

"His face was a study when he saw the deserted building. There wasn't a human being in sight. Office doors swung open. Sets on the stages were dark and forlorn. The only sign of any life was a cat who prowled about the place.

"Finally Mabel's convulsions of laughter attracted his attention and she climbed down from her hiding place, crying with laughter."

That, of course, happened years ago. But it quite coincides with later stories we have heard.

"There is no one in the world like Mabel," Mr. MacDonald added, "No one else quite so thoughtful of others.

"Both Mrs. MacDonald and I will be forever in her debt. I knew her only casually and Doris has only met her once. But when our baby was born dead, she slipped out of the courtroom in the midst of her own troubles to send Doris flowers and a sincerely sympathetic note.

"That is typical of her as any number of people in Hollywood could testify.

"She's Irish. That perhaps explains her best of all."

* from *Photoplay*, October 1925

Mabel Normand, after having given a very exciting farewell party at her new Beverly Hills Italian bungalow, has left for New York to begin rehearsals for the fall opening of her new stage comedy under the management of Al Woods. It's her great chance and Mabel knows it. She looked lovely at the charming party she gave to say good-bye to her friends and no one ever carried such loads of prayers and well-wishes from the film colony.

* from *Photoplay*, October 1925

There is music in the air at the Sennett studio these days for the first time since Mabel Normand left it. And it is on Harry Langdon's set.

Mabel always had music. She had to have music -- sad music, gay music. But no one since has been considered of enough importance or enough temperament to be provided with it. The fact that they get it for quiet, gentle little Harry Langdon shows the regard in which he is held by Mack Sennett.

* from *Chicago Herald Examiner*, November 8, 1925

· From an article on stunt doubles in motion pictures

...Ray Thompson is now playing some important roles in pictures, but he first gained recognition by his daring horsemanship. Many audiences were thrilled by Mabel Normand's "Mickey," a play in which a horserace was featured. Mabel mounted the thoroughbred, posed for a few close-up pictures, then gave way to "Red" Thompson, who rode the race. This was staged at the old Exposition Park track in Los Angeles, where 10,000 persons were on the grounds.

To this day few know that the horse which fell near the grandstand that afternoon was put in the race to be thrown by its rider before a motion picture camera, stationed just back of a small white flag on the fence. When Ray suddenly reached forward and pulled his mount's head quickly and violently to one side and caused the animal to stumble and go down in a heap, the great crowd gasped.

Ray lay still on the track and a crowd quickly gathered. All the time the camera was clicking.

"Stand back! Stand back and give him air!" some special officer shouted.

After the camera had enough Ray arose, smiled, and said: "Gentlemen, I think you. That will be all today."

He led his horse, not hurt, away. And many persons have marveled at the wonderful ride that "Mabel Normand" made in "Mickey," and marveled that she escaped in such a nasty spill...

* from *Los Angeles Times*, November 12, 1925

Mabel Normand's New One

The truth regarding Mabel Normand's engagement in "The Little Mouse," the A. H. Woods Production, seems to be coming out little by little. It seems that the farce is one which Woods has looked for some time, and which he has tried several times to put over under different names. He never succeeded, and it looks as though he counted on the cleverness and popularity of Mabel Normand to make the lame duck walk. But even her talents were not equal to the task. Now Miss Normand is awaiting a new play from the facile pen of Willard Mack.

* from *Photoplay*, December 1925

" Herbert Howe

When Mabel Normand went East to appear on the stage she listed her house for rent...the agents rented it to Barbara La Marr.

1926

* from *Photoplay*, February 1926

Upon her return from Europe, Irene Rich was honored by the Warner Brothers with a dinner dance at the Casa Lopez. She looked charming as ever, but was quite apologetic because she hadn't had time to get a new gown for the party. You see, Irene had taken her two daughters to Europe and placed them in school in Switzerland, and their stay in Paris was spent outfitting the children. So Mamma was neglected.

Nevertheless, the line formed to the right of Irene's table, and it took all four Warner Brothers to fight off her prospective dancing partners.

Mabel Normand in an ermine wrap looked well and happy. Natacha [Natasha] Rambova made her usual striking appearance in her draped turban. Clive Brook and John Roche were among the most popular dancing partners.

After the dinner and some dancing, the Warner Brothers' newest opus, "Lady Windermere's Fan," was run off for the guests...

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 23, 1926

Normand Signs With Hal Roach

Mabel Normand back!

Hal Roach has signed Miss Normand to make one short comedy feature for his series of "Star Comedies," the previous ones of which feature Theda Bara, Lionel Barrymore, Claude Gillingwater, Ethel Clayton and other notable players.

March 5 has been set as the tentative production starting date.

Richard Wallace, who, with the collaboration of Stan Laurel, directed the Theda Bara and Gillingwater comedies, and is now busy with the Ethel Clayton vehicle, will handle the Mabel Normand picture.

Under the supervision of F. Richard Jones, director-general, the story and production details are being prepared. No supporting players have been announced. The return of Miss Normand to the screen marks the most interesting single event in the revolutionary production policy established a few months ago by Hal Roach.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 1926

Mabel Normand Returns²¹³

Declaring that she was "the most anxious person in the world" to have the Taylor case cleared up, Mabel Normand, still wearing the smile that gained her fame on the screen arrived in Los Angeles yesterday, after an absence of a year.

"But I don't know any more about the case than I have already told authorities," she said, when interviewed at the Ambassador. "I'll be glad to do everything I can to help; I hope Mr. Keyes will be able to solve the mystery, but when he was in New York recently he did not call on me, so apparently I have nothing to do with the clew he is now working on."

Mabel, who has been appearing in legitimate-stage productions in the East, came from New York over the Santa Fe.

"When I got up this morning everything was so beautiful and it was so warm and sunny that I decided to get off the train at San Bernadino and motor down. It is good to be back after all the snow and ice back East."

Miss Normand will start work at the Hal Roach studio in Culver City Thursday on a series of comedies. She expects to remain in Los Angeles for some time. She made the trip from New York alone.

Although she declared she knows of no new phase of the Taylor case, Mabel still was interested in what possible developments there might be, and showed a deep interest in the present investigation.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, March 8, 1926

Mabel Denies New Probe In Taylor Death

"I don't know a thing more than I ever did about the mysterious murder of William Desmond Taylor. District Attorney Asa Keyes was in New York at the same time I was, and he made no attempt, so far as I know, to get in touch with me.

"There would have been nothing accomplished if he had, as I told the authorities absolutely everything I know about that terrible tragedy at the time it happened."

Such was the statement yesterday of Mabel Normand, popular stage and screen star, upon her return from the Eastern metropolis where she had been on the legitimate stage for the past seven months. She came in on the Santa Fe, disembarking at San Bernardino, thereby missing a large and enthusiastic crowd of fans who were at the station to greet her. She went at once to the Ambassador Hotel.

Miss Normand, in a later interview on the Taylor case said:

"No one would be happier than I if that mysterious murder could be solved. It seems almost impossible that such a thing could happen and the murder escape punishment. I am willing now and always have been to talk to any of the authorities, but I told Mr. Thomas Lee Woolwine at the time, all I knew."

Miss Normand starts her first picture for Hal Roach on March 11. It is to be a comedy.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, March 14, 1926

Florence Lawrence Says:

Screen's Laughing Sprite Returns - Mabel Bubbles With Fun - She Wants World to Laugh

Writers of the whole world have poured their meed of praise at the feet of Mabel Normand.

They have lavished their adjectives, and the adulation on her beautiful eyes, her winsome half pathetic smile and on her genius. Every word of it is deserved and justified by the actress herself. But to me Mabel is unique in one great respect.

She is the only comedy star of the screen who is humorous off stage as well as on. To most of the great figures of the cinema art is long and time is fleeting. They wear a heavy air in everyday discourse. They ponder and wonder and worry.

But not Mabel.

She's a laughing, witty sprite. She keeps her humor on hand every moment of the time, and it was never in better form than last night when she chatted with me about her recent stage experiences.

Mabel has just returned from several months on the Eastern rialto. And she admits that she's no longer stage struck.

²¹³ That Asa Keyes re-opening of the Taylor case in 1926, coming precisely as it did at the time of Mabel's comeback, no doubt contributed to its bitterness to Mabel.

"The stage is wonderful for a time," she says, "and then it grows monotonous. It's a constant effort to do the same thing over and over -- to speak the same lines and assume the same expression day after day. I expected to find my seventh heaven of joy across the footlights -- and now I know that the screen offers more to me in a moment than the spoken drama can ever give."

Bubbling with excitement over her return to the screen, Mabel is a regular visitor at the Hal Roach studio.

She's not working yet. But the scenario corps is even now working night and day getting the new story ready for production. However, work or not, Mabel is to be seen passing the studio gateman each morning. She revels in the studio atmosphere. She listens with the trained ear of the expert to the buzzing of the studio lights, and no war horse ever danced off to the fray with the spirit that she shows when a director calls "camera."

"I'm glad I'm to get right back into regular comedy," said the star in that rich, throaty voice of hers. "And do you know I shall be particularly glad to make two-reelers again. I believe there is more laughter per foot in the short comedy, and after all laughter is what a screen comic wants, isn't it?"

Mabel Normand won her first fame in short features.

* from Roach Studio production records, Hal Roach Papers, University of Southern California Special Collections

Normand Filming schedule

Normand and Wallace

Mar. 15, 1926 to Mar. 20, 1926

Mar. 22 to Mar. 27

Mar. 29 to April 2, 1926

Normand and Storm

June 14, 1926 to June 17, 1926

June 19 to June 26 (dir. Hal Yates {Jones?} joins 26th)

June 28 to July 3, 1926

Roach studio closed month of July

Normand and Yates (with Hayden Seyffertitz, Von Eltz, Max Davidson)

Sept. 21 to Sept. 25, 1926

Sept. 27 to Oct. 3

Oct. 4 to Oct. 9

Oct. 11 to Oct. 12

Normand and McCarey

Oct. 25 to Oct. 30, 1926 Nov. 1 to Nov. 6

Nov. 8 to Nov. 11, 1926

~ Mabel Normand's salary at Roach Studios per week.

Week of:

March 13, 1926 -- \$500

March 20, 1926 -- \$1000

April 3, 1926 -- \$1,041.67

by June 19, 1926 -- \$1,500

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 23, 1926

Mabel Decries Ghost Revival

Take it from Mabel Normand, she is the most willing little mystery murder witness in the world. Not only is she quite willing to be questioned, but she is about at the point where she will insist upon being interrogated.

That much was learned from her yesterday when she was informed when she was informed that dispatches from Detroit quoted Dist.-Atty. Keyes as saying he intended to question Mabel in regard to the death of William D. Taylor, as soon as he got back to Los Angeles.

Mabel sighed when she heard about the dispatch. A great weariness seemed to descend. Then she spoke as follows:

"Say if I have to repeat this again, I'm going to set it to music to relieve the monotony. I've already committed it to memory, so here goes. I'm quite ready to be questioned by Mr. Keyes, now or at any other time. I'll tell him the same things I told Mr. Woolwine at the time of the murder, which was everything I know about the case. No one would like to see the mystery cleared up any more than I and no one will be more willing to co-operate to that extent.

"Now please., that's all I can say -- what more can I say?" declared Mabel and stretched out her arms expressively.

The motion-picture star read the eastern dispatches while on her set at the Hal Roach studio. Dressed in a ragged Cinderella costume, a character that made her famous, it served to accentuate her attitude.

To be frank, Mabel says, life would be one grand, sweet song for her, so to speak, if some one wasn't always dragging out the ghost of William Desmond Taylor and parading it before her.

"Here I am just getting started in pictures again, and then they begin it all over again," she says. "Oh, I hope Mr. Keyes is on the right track and that they settle it for good and all this time."

Mabel is quite willing to discuss the various phases of the case as she knows them. The night of the murder—

"I went over to his home to give him a scenario to read and he loaned me a book to read. Do I think there might have been another woman in the house all the time I was there? Oh, I don't think so!

"I never saw Sands, Taylor's secretary, but once. I know that Mr. Taylor left signed checks for Sands to fill out when he went on the trip. He must have had a lot of confidence in Sands to do that.

"But everything was so mysterious about Mr. Taylor. He was so well known, but yet so little known about him! Why I never dreamed that he had been married and had a grown daughter until it was learned after he died. And no one else seemed to know it either; at least none of the people I knew.

"I never knew Mary Miles Minter very well. Mr. Taylor never said anything about her to me. I didn't see her when I was back East."

Taylor apparently had been in love with Miss Minter before becoming enamored with Miss Normand.

Despite adroit questioning, Mabel insisted that she had no pet theory of her own as to who might have murdered Taylor and why. However, she admitted that various articles of women's clothing found in his bungalow were interesting developments in the case. Also, that the slain director was fascinating personality, well-read a wide traveler and extremely interesting.

"So that's that," said Mabel, in conclusion. "I'll be here when Mr. Keyes gets back. I'm sorry he didn't find me in New York, but I didn't make any effort to avoid him. I didn't know he was making any efforts to find me or I would have gone to him."

* from *Los Angeles Evening Express*, March 24, 1926

"Persecution," Mabel Normand Says In Keyes' Probe of Taylor Murder

"I am being harassed," cried Mabel Normand today, when an interviewer questioned her at the Hal Roach studios.

"I have answered a million questions regarding the Taylor murder case, and my nerves are so upset."

Miss Normand seemed on the verge of hysteria. She has been questioned time and again during the past few days since the district attorney announced in the East that he had uncovered new clues that might lead to the solution of the mysterious murder of the motion picture director.

"It's the same thing over and over again," she said. "The same questions -- the same answers. I have told all I know about the murder hundreds of times, yet they keep at me. I tell you my nerves are frayed."

Officials of the studio also deplored the fact that the comedy star was constantly harassed by investigators. They said that it interfered with her work, delayed production and kept Miss Normand in such a state that she could not do her best work.

"All of the stories printed in the newspapers have been duplications," said the actress. "I did not leave New York to escape Mr. Keyes.

"He knew, or must have known, when I was to depart. The papers both in New York and Los Angeles of February published stories to the effect that I had signed a contract and would be in Los Angeles to take up the duties at the Roach studio March 1."

Miss Normand took the stand that Keyes had plenty of time to interview her in New York before she left for Los Angeles. She said a rumor printed in a Manhattan paper on February 12 to the effect that she was negotiating with the Hal Roach studio should have been information enough to cause Keyes to seek her out and interview her should he have decided.

Miss Normand began her duties at the studio on a new picture March 6.

Today the star was making up for her part in the forthcoming production and laid aside her work to answer the questions put to her. She appeared very nervous and sighed frequently when she spoke.

"It seems so useless," she said. "To ask these questions all over again."

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, March 25, 1926

" Morris Lavine

New evidence that a woman, not a motion picture actress plotted the murder of William Desmond Taylor, film director, has come into the possession of District Attorney Asa Keyes and his chief deputy, Burton Fitts, it was learned from reliable sources here yesterday. A witness who talked to this woman following the murder has been located.

Whether this woman actually committed the murder or whether a man did it at her suggestion and instigation has been the subject of the investigation of District Attorney Keyes in the East.

According to information said to be in possession of Keyes, this woman actually knew of the murder long before the police officers did and was highly nervous. She talked to a friend about it.

"Mr. Keyes will have to discuss this evidence," said Mr. Fitts yesterday, "as it is of such importance to the case that I do not feel at liberty to talk. All the statements must come from him."

Coincident with the announcement by Keyes that he will question Mary Miles Minter again, who has been of considerable assistance to him in the case and who will come to Los Angeles for that purpose, he also stated that he will question Mrs. Charlotte Shelby, mother of Mary Miles Minter, and also Miss Mabel Normand, film comedienne, who has also offered every assistance.

Mabel Normand, on the verge of hysterics, declared she was ready and willing at all times to assist the district attorney in his investigation.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Burton Fitts announced last night that he had received a telegram from District Attorney Asa Keyes instructing him to give out an authorized statement as to the position of the district attorney's office with reference to Miss Normand.

"Mr. Keyes has instructed me to say that Miss Normand at no time had any connection with the Taylor murder. She was exonerated by this office after a very thorough investigation of the case and the only things she knows are of a very minor nature and are very general. She has been put in a false position through rumors and innuendoes and gossip and this is indeed very unfortunate.

"I am sure that Miss Normand has told everything she knows about the case to Mr. Woolwine, my predecessor and I have been assured that she will gladly co-operate with me in every way in the solution of the case.

This is further corroborated by her return to Los Angeles. Without disclosing the evidence in this case any further it is important that this statement be made in justice and fairness to Miss Normand."

Keyes probably will leave Chicago today and is due to return to Los Angeles by April 1.

At the home of Mrs. Charlotte Shelby, her daughter, sister of Mary Miles Minter, referred all questioners to Attorney G. Mott.

Last night Mr. Mott said:

"I have known Mrs. Shelby and the entire family for a long time and I am sure they are all ready and willing to help in every way to clear up the Taylor murder mystery. I do not know whether Mrs. Shelby was questioned at the time of the murder, but she was always willing to be of assistance in the case. I have not talked to her recently about it, as she naturally does not want to be harassed with a matter that is now four years old.

"I cannot say at this time what her attitude will be in regard to the desire of Mr. Keyes to question her, but I am sure she will help in every way in the case."

When told that Mary Miles Minter had made a statement in New York, Mr. Mott said:

"Mary is responsible for her own statements, and anyone who places any credence in them will likewise be held responsible."

* from *Photoplay*, June 1926

" Nate Gazert

Behind the Portals

"Personality" is a much abused word, yet it undoubtedly plays a leading role on the stage of life. To reflect Personality in one's surroundings is the art that changes a "residence" into a "home."

Miss Mabel Normand has succeeded in this art as perfectly as in the art of cinema. Her home is a thing of charm, hospitality, luxury -- but in no manner is one ever conscious of a striving for display or ostentation.

The charm of her personality is captured and held within the walls of her home in a manner that forms for her the perfect background, the assurance that comes with perfect harmony, the joy and contentment that spells happiness.

[the following are captions to photos accompanying this piece:]

Hospitality -- Gleaming Italian walnut against a background of soft blue and old gold. Wondrous chair fabrics enhanced by hangings of burnt orange velour and hand block linen.

Charm -- Rare old pieces

Comfort: -- Downy-deep cushions. A silk Prayer rug -- Golden rays from a lamp of marvelous old bronze and enamel inlay.

Enchantment: -- Ornate teak from far-away China. A perfect setting for the bridge party, mah-jongg or afternoon tea.

Welcome: -- An entrance hall that makes a perfect "lap-dissolve" from an inviting exterior to a welcoming interior.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, June 16, 1926

Mabel Normand's Cast

Mabel Normand's first picture made for Hal Roach under her new contract will have a cast of important sounding names.

It became known yesterday that Creighton Hale will be her leading man, while Jimmy Finlayson will be a fighting major. Tyler Brooke is to serve as efficiency man of the army; Noah Young will be a hard boiled sergeant. Others will be Clarence Geldert, Sid Crossley, Fred Malatesta and Robert Kortman. Jerome Storm²¹⁴ is directing and F. Richard Jones is supervising.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1926

Comedy Blast Burns Miss Normand²¹⁵

An accident Monday kept Mabel Normand confined to her home Tuesday, but did not prevent her from resuming work yesterday, it was stated by officials of the Hal Roach studio, where she is employed. Miss Normand is engaged in making a war picture, and she suffered a painful burn when a comedy bomb exploded behind her.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, July 4, 1926

Mabel Is Back Again In Comedy

The world premiere at the Forum this week of Mabel Normand's "comeback" comedy, "Raggedy Rose," in connection with the showing of "The Wise Guy," is a welcome event to admirers of the little comedienne.

"Raggedy Rose" is the first of her series of comedies of short length for Hal Roach, with whom she recently signed a three-year contract. In it, a typical "Normandish" story, she portrays the raggedy assistant to a second hand store proprietor, who meets her Prince Charming in an alley, and through a peculiar and particularly laughable series of events finally routs her only rival for his hand.

There is only one Mabel Normand. There will probably never be another. As one celebrated critic has said "many of the present day 'artists' are traveling in the ruts made by Mabel Normand."

Most of "Raggedy Rose," of course, permits her to wear nothing but the habiliments she has made famous in so many of her stories heretofore, but, as she expresses it, there was "one divine moment," when even though the scene was visionary, she was permitted to wear beautiful clothes. In rags she is charming and tantalizing -- in clothes of beauty, she is radiant, even more captivating.

Mabel is at present completing her second Hal Roach comedy, "One Hour Married," in which Creighton Hale is her leading man. Upon its completion, she will take a thirty-day rest, some of which will be spent on the beach, and she will include a short run to Honolulu, she says.

²¹⁴ Storm had been a director for Thomas Ince.

²¹⁵ The accident referred to here occurred during the filming of *One Hour Married*.

She is endeavoring to persuade F. Richard Jones, director-general at Hal Roach's that her next picture should be "water stuff," and those who remember her from the old Keystone days will agree with her. Apparently she is so confident of her success in persuading them that she's going to devote her thirty-day vacation to practice at the Australian crawl and other fancy strokes.

Mabel suffered a slight accident the past week, in making "One Hour Married," which has a warlike atmosphere, and in which she plays the part of a female doughboy, if the phrase may be permitted. A comedy-bomb exploded near her, burning her painfully, though not seriously, and she was incapacitated for a day or two.

Mabel Normand is a good sport, however. On the night of the accident, even though it was her tenth successive one in muddy trenches, she refused to leave the set until the scenes upon which she was working were completed.

She is happy now to be moving from the hotel back into her beautiful Beverly Hills home, which has been rented since her recent trip to New York.

* from publicity press-book for *Raggedy Rose*, 1926

MABEL NORMAND IN 'RAGGEDY ROSE'

The Brightest Star in the Firmament of Filmdom Is Back Once More In The Kind of Role She Made Immortal ¾ *The News Has Been Broadcast Far and Wide* ¾

Here's How to Cash In On It!

Mabel Normand's Comeback Screen Event of the Year

The most notable come-back of the year is that of Miss Mabel Normand in a new Hal Roach-Pathé comedy entitled "Raggedy Rose" which will be one of the features of the program....at the...Theatre. In the type of role she made famous, she returns after a retirement of several seasons.

Miss Normand needs no more introduction to screen followers than do motion pictures themselves. Ever since the early days when she and Roscoe Arbuckle were known as "Fatty and Mabel," she has enjoyed tremendous popularity. As a matter of fact, she is one of the institutions of the screen. That is, she is one of the traditions of filmdom and there is not a picture-goer on earth who doesn't know her, who is not thoroughly familiar with her delightful comedy methods, or who does not welcome every opportunity to see her in a new picture.

For the last few years Miss Normand has come to the screen all too infrequently. For this reason, the picture fans owe Hal Roach a debt of gratitude, for it was he who finally induced Miss Normand to return to the type of picture that won for her greatest fame.

Mabel, in "Raggedy Rose," is the assistant of a second-hand man. In fact, everything in her life is second hand, even sunshine. She has her dreams of Princes Charming, but like most dreams, they are nothing more. But how she does eventually find a real flesh-and-blood Prince, is the theme of this delightful comedy. Through her tatters and rags, Mabel shines in all the brilliance of her former glory.

"Raggedy Rose" was given a pre-release showing at the Forum Theatre in Los Angeles and the result proved conclusively that Mabel Normand has lost none of the prestige that was once hers. The audience howled during the run of the comedy, and all the critics had nothing but praise for her work in this, her come-back picture.

It is with great pleasure that Hal Roach announces that Miss Normand will be seen in a series of short comedies during the coming year and that every facility of the Hal Roach studios will be placed at her disposal. He is confident that the Normand comedies to come will equal, if not surpass, the heights reached in "Raggedy Rose."

Carl Miller gives an excellent portrayal as Miss Normand's leading man, while Max Davidson as the junk dealer, is said to reach dizzy heights of perfection. From all accounts, "Raggedy Rose," is a picture not to be missed.

"Raggedy Rose" Is Mabel Normand's Latest Hit

Mabel Normand, whose appearance in "Raggedy Rose" which comes....to the....Theatre, marks her return to pictures, was born in Boston, Mass. Educated at St. Mary's Convent at Northwest Port, Mass., she became an artist's model for Charles Dana Gibson, the famous creator of the Gibson Girl, and who is now getting perhaps the highest salary ever paid a cartoonist for his clever sketches in the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*. Soon after, she was much sought after by other famous cartoonists and was thus securely launched upon a professional career.

At the suggestion of her friend, Alice Joyce, who was at that time an artist's model herself, she tried her luck in motion pictures and almost immediately secured a part in a D. W. Griffith picture. She then went over to Mack Sennett and joined his famous Keystone unit. For years she starred in Sennett comedies and it was there that she won the title of comedy queen.

A few years ago Miss Normand retired from the screen. That she was sorely missed was evidenced by the fact that thousands of picture fans wrote letters requesting that she return to the medium in which she had made her greatest success.

But it remained for Hal Roach to persuade her to return in the kind of comedy she made unique in the heyday of her fame. The result is "Raggedy Rose" and this picture was acclaimed by critics and public alike at a preview which was held recently in Los Angeles at the Forum Theatre, Miss Normand "stole" the show and great was the rejoicing at her return to pictures.

It is with great pleasure that Mr. Roach announces that she will be seen further in a series of short comedies which will be produced this year at the Roach studios. No expense will be spared in the matter of story material, direction and supporting casts. The future Mabel Normand comedies bid fair to become as popular as "Raggedy Rose" which has had such an auspicious start.

Mabel, as the little assistant to a junk dealer, is her old-time delightful self and she puts in this portrayal all the brilliance of her former characterizations. Others in the notable cast include Carl Miller, Max Davidson, Jimmie Finlayson, Anita Garvin and Laura LaVarnie.

The picture was directed by Richard Wallace who will be remembered for his directorial work on the two Roach comedies starring Lionel Barrymore and Theda Bara, namely, "Wife Tamers" and "Madame Mystery."

"Raggedy Rose" First of New Normand Comedies

It was a red letter day for the lovers of comedy when Mabel Normand and Hal Roach placed their well known signatures upon a contract which arranged for the return of Miss Normand to the screen in a series of short feature comedies.

And now the time has come when the public may reap their enjoyment of that famous contract, for "Raggedy Rose," Mabel's first contribution under same to the gaiety of nations, will be shown....at the....Theatre.

This comedy, which marks Miss Normand's return to the screen, was made under the personal supervision of F. Richard Jones, director general of the Hal Roach studios, and this, in itself, is a distinct recommendation. Jones was formerly Mabel's director, having been responsible directorially for her tremendous success. He is now in charge of production on the Roach lot, and needless to say, devoted a great deal of his personal attention to her first release.

In "Raggedy Rose," Mabel has a fitting successor to the successes of former days, such as "Molly O," "Suzanna," "Mickey," etc. She is again seen as a blundering, awkward but beautiful and big-hearted little girl who is ever in hot water, but for whom the sun eventually shines.

In "Raggedy Rose" which was directed by Richard Wallace in collaboration with Stan Laurel, Mabel is supported by a stellar cast including Carl Miller, James Finlayson, Max Davidson, Anita Garvin and Laura La Varnie.

"Raggedy Rose," a Hal Roach comedy, marks the return of Mabel Normand to the screen after a retirement lasting several seasons. It comes....to the....Theatre. In this fun festival, Mabel enjoys ample opportunity for the quaint comedy interpretation which has retained for her a topmost round on the ladder of popularity. She portrays the somewhat pitiful, but at the same time hilariously funny employee in a large and disorderly second-hand store. Finally, by her wits alone, she succeeds in finding the Prince Charming of whom she has had but a glimpse in an alley on a moonlit night. Richard Wallace directed this offering in collaboration with Stan Laurel. Ably supporting Miss Normand are Carl Miller, Jimmie Finlayson, Max Davidson, Anita Garvin and Laura La Varnie.

Back in the Keystone days, two artists associated in what proved to be a most happy alliance. F. Richard Jones became the director of a promising young comedienne named Mabel Normand. And Fate, whose little tricks often make life all the more interesting, has brought these two together in the making of "Raggedy Rose," Mabel's come-back picture marking her return to the screen, which will be a feature of the bill..... at the....Theatre. Jones is now vice-president and director general of the Hal Roach studios, with which organization Mabel has signed a contract for a series of short comedy features of which "Raggedy Rose" is the first. It was Jones who directed Miss Normand in three of her greatest successes, namely "Molly O," "Suzanna," and "The Extra Girl." Dick and Mabel resumed their acquaintanceship in this new comedy and the result is said to rank with the greatest of all her previous screen efforts.

Mabel Normand, upon whose brow has long rested the crown of comedy, is with us again. Her welcome return will be marked by the showing.....at the....Theatre of "Raggedy Rose," the new Hal Roach-Pathé comedy. In this film of fun, Mabel appears in the character of a ragged but carefree assistant in a smelly second-hand store. Her adventures are legion and at times disconcerting, but it all ends happily. Miss Normand, in this picture is said to give as delightful a performance as those which characterized her great success, "Molly O," "Mickey," and "Suzanna."

Road To Fame Is Long and Hard

Mabel Normand Gives Timely Advice to Screen-Struck Girls Bound for Hollywood

"As long as the motion picture exists, it will always hold out a great lure to the youth of the land," says Mabel Normand who makes her return to the screen in the stellar role of "Raggedy Rose," the new Hal Roach-Pathé comedy which comes....to the....Theater. Miss Normand says further:

"Few towns there are that haven't a movie house. The spots that do not boast a picture palace are few and far between and where they do exist, the movie fans make it a point to journey to the nearest town that does offer motion picture entertainment. And throughout the land, the boys and girls are unquestionably dyed-in-the-wool magazine fans. They follow the stars and their works through the publications that cater to the stage and screen.

"It is the most natural thing in the world for every girl to want to go into the movies. To become a star seems very simple to the aspiring miss beyond the pale of the movie realm and constant reading of the doings of the players adds to the desire to break into the game. It is a great deal more than a game, however, as the newcomers quickly learn when they start in active movie work.

"It is very easy to encourage the yearning of any girl to become a picture actress. It is very, very hard to discourage her. It may seem out of place for me to say this, having succeeded in becoming a star, but I do want every girl contemplating a picture to take into consideration the hardships and the small chance of success. If I can thereby save one broken heart, the effort will have been worth while.

"To be sure, there will be some who will reach their goal, yet to everyone that climbs the ladder, there will be hundreds who will get no further than the classification of 'extra.' There are hundreds, who are still knocking at the door of opportunity. They have been watching and waiting for the chance that never comes except to the very few.

"My rise to stardom was no path of roses. It was hard work and there were many bitter disappointments, with many an hour of reflection when the feeling came over me that the lane was too long and arduous for the reward that was to come. And while a star may be a star, it is far easier and quicker to drop into oblivion than to scale the heights. And as I remarked at the beginning, few make the grade."

Miss Normand, in her come-back picture after a retirement of several seasons, is said to give one of the best portrayals of her long and successful career as a comedienne. Comedy and pathos are mixed with the Normand touch that so many thousand of picture-goers have come to know and love so well. In "Raggedy Rose," Miss Normand is said to have a vehicle well worthy to carry on where "Mickey" and "Molly O" left off.

High Praise For Miss Normand In "Raggedy Rose"

The world's premiere showing of the Pathe-Hal Roach comedy, "Raggedy Rose," which brings Mabel Normand back to the screen at the Forum Theatre, Los Angeles, was joyously received by the public and the critics. The opening was an event of considerable importance at filmdom's capital and brought out many of the great stars of the firmament.

Louella Parsons, writing in the Los Angeles Examiner, echoed the sentiments of hundreds of loyal friends of Miss Normand when she said, "It's great to have Mabel Normand and to see her with all her old-time sparkle and spontaneity."

"As the forlorn helper in a second-hand junk shop, Mabel has the opportunity for both comedy and pathos. She proved, to the delight of her friends, that she has not lost her sense of comedy and her ability to make the most out of every situation.

"I am glad to say that Mr. Roach is planning a series of similar comedies. I have a feeling that Mabel will find herself and come back with even greater emphasis in her succeeding pictures. F. Richard Jones, who understands the value of Mabel's screen personality, supervised the production."

The critic of the Los Angeles Herald said:

"Mabel's long absence from the screen has not in any way hurt her popularity among motion picture patrons, if the reception at the Forum is any criterion. In the role of a pawnbroker's assistant, Miss Normand is given ample opportunity to display the mannerisms and comedy genius that originally won her the position of comedy queen."

* from *Exhibitors Herald*, September 18, 1926

Pathe' Presents Fine Array -- Hal Roach and Mack Sennett Heading Units

...Charley Chase is now established as a comedian with a tremendous following. Custard pies and trick clothes are unknown in Charley's studio lexicon and he has climbed to the top through sheer acting ability. The bringing back of Mabel Normand was a master stroke, heralded by every newspaper in the country, on the part of Mr. Roach, and the theatre-going public is looking forward to her first comedy showing.

Mack Sennett, famed the world over as the man who made the bathing beauty a fixture in the screen entertainment, is again stressing the water nymph in many of his comedies...

* from *Los Angeles Times*, September 18, 1926

WEDDING STIRS FILMLAND

Elopement of Mabel Normand and Lew Cody on Spur of Moment Surpasses Thrilling Film Drama

While Hollywood pinched itself yesterday to see if it was really awake, if it could be true that Mabel Normand and Lew Cody,²¹⁶ film stars, were the principals in a midnight elopement and marriage in Ventura Thursday night, further details of the episode, leaking out, revealed that the trip was accomplished with an impulsiveness which surpassed the wildest screen drama.

In fact Cody had but \$5 in his pockets when the marriage tour started, and was obliged to borrow \$20 more from the Beverly Hills Chief of Police and from a sleepy druggist it was revealed.

Both the bride and groom seemed to share in the general excitement pervading the film colony yesterday. They met, for the first time since eating breakfast at dawn, at Cody's home in mid-afternoon when the actor appeared at Mabel's home for pictures to be taken.

"Well, it's been on both our minds for a long time, only we didn't know it," Cody explained, as his valet sought vainly to find clothes to suit the bridegroom's taste.

The actor had just finished a swim in the pool at the back of his home. He had arisen but an hour before and was due at Mabel's home in thirty minutes.

"Mabel and I had thought a lot of each other since the days I played the heavy in 'Mickey,'" Lew said. "But our decision last night was sudden. It started at a dinner party at Mabel's home at which Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Ray, Miss Marguerite Namara, Minert Lord, Mabel and myself were present I proposed in a whisper to Mabel and she accepted me."

First reports were that Miss Namara and Lord were the ones who intended to be married when the party started for Ventura.

Cody declared that he and Mabel will take up their residence at his home in Beverly Hills and that they will go to Europe on a honeymoon after the completion of their next pictures. Asked whether Mabel will dispose of her new home the actor replied that he was not the type to live in his wife's home, but if there was any argument, they would have to dispose of both homes and build a new one.

Telegrams were pouring into the Cody home as the actor, with his business representative, left to keep the tryst at Mabel's house.

Arriving there, they were greeted by Mabel and Dick Jones of the Hal Roach lot, who introduced the couple during the making of "Mickey." Jones revealed that Mabel is due to start a new picture immediately and that although this cannot be postponed, it will take only a few weeks to film. Then Mabel will be free for a honeymoon.

Cody's next picture at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio is in preparation he declared.

Friends of the couple and newspapermen had been seeking them vainly during the morning. Many of the former refused at first to believe the reports of the marriage. In fact several, whom Cody called from Ventura at 3 a.m. to invite to a wedding breakfast, laughed and told him to forget it.

So the gathering at the Cody home for breakfast was a small one. Following it, Lew took Mabel back to her house, he said, and returned home to get a little sleep.

Mabel appeared at the Roach studio during the morning and the following typewritten statement was forthcoming from her:

"I love Lew -- that's all and, of course, I consider him the finest man in the world. We have been wonderful friends for years. And last night at my home he proposed and I accepted him."

²¹⁶ Born Louis J. Cote, in Waterville, Maine, Feb. 22, 1888, he attended medical school in Montreal, and later went into acting, first vaudeville, the stage, then pictures, initially working for Balboa Film Company and Selig. Other companies he subsequently worked for included Paramount, Jewel, First National, Selznick, Metro-Goldwyn Mayer, Tiffany-Truant. As often as not he was cast as the romantic lead or the villain (as, for example, in Mabel's film *Mickey*), sometimes as an urbane, no-nonsense hero. Legally, Cody was a Canadian citizen. He died on May 31, 1934 of Myocardial Insufficiency (heart failure.) He was quite popular with men and woman alike, and with a gritty sort of masculine (Clark Gable-like sounding) voice, fared relatively well when sound came in. His career probably would have continued successfully but for his early death.

That acceptance was voiced sometime about midnight. Shortly thereafter, preceded by two Beverly Hills motorcycle officers, the bride and groom-to-be, accompanied by two friends, were roaring away toward Ventura in Cody's car, with the motorcycle officers pacing them.

L. E. Hollowell, County Clerk, at home, looked toward a night of undisturbed rest, when he was brought out of bed by a vigorous sustained knocking at his front door.

He opened his front door and there stood Miss Normand and Cody together with Marguerite Namara, Chicago Opera Company prima donna, and Minert Lord of New York. Cody demanded a marriage license. Hollowell protested but was overruled. He dressed, climbed in Cody's car with the sleep still heavy in his eyes and went to his office. There he issued the license.

The marriage cavalcade took Hollowell back to home and bed and departed.

Judge Thomas R. Meilandt, City Recorder of Ventura, also was deep in sleep. It was about 3 a.m. There came a knocking and a pounding and Judge Meilandt staggered out to see what was up. He was told briefly, consented, and dressed.

A few minutes later, Mabel Normand and Lew Cody were one. Miss Namara, Mr. Lord and Ruth Meilandt, Judge Meilandt's daughter, were the actual witnesses to the ceremony. But through a crack in the door, the remainder of the judge's family struggled for the best observation posts throughout the ceremony.

The bride and the groom and the witnesses left with Judge Meilandt's blessing, but the judge failed to kiss the bride. It was an oversight, apparently.

Some hours later, Cody was officiating as toastmaster, at the Breakfast Club.

"Fellows," Cody bashfully began, "I went to a party last night.-- It was my wedding party. I married Mabel Normand."

Cody still wore the dark brown business suit in which he had been married and Miss Normand presumably was still attired in the black satin dress with ermine collar and black satin hat in which she had appeared in her first venture into marriage. She, however, was not at the Breakfast Club meeting, having remained at Cody's home in Beverly Hills after the hasty wedding breakfast.

The unexpected elopement and marriage of two of its best known principals took the film colony completely by surprise. They were known to have been good friends for years, but the idea of marriage had seldom been associated with them.

But Miss Normand in her statement disclosed that their romance was of four year's duration, having its inception at the time Cody appeared as leading man in one of her best-known pictures, "Mickey."

"He had proposed before," she said in her statement, "the first time, I believe, on the night of the opening of the Beverly Hills Theater. At that time I hesitated, believing it possibly some passing infatuation. But time proved that our love was more substantial, so now I'm Mrs. Lew Cody."

It is Miss Normand's first venture into matrimony and Cody's second. Miss Normand, however, is not unused to the limelight. Years ago she was in Mack Sennett's constellation of hand-picked beauties. Later she became a star in her own right and was at the height of her popularity as a comedienne when William Desmond Taylor, screen director, was murdered at his home in a crime which still remains an enigma.

She was one of the last to see him alive and was drawn into the case as one of its chief figures. Two years ago she again occupied the front pages of newspapers all over the nation when Courtland S. Dines, a wealthy Denver man, was shot in his apartment by her chauffeur. She and Edna Purviance, at that time Charles Chaplin's leading lady, were present at the shooting.

Cody tried marriage once before with Dorothy Dalton, former screen actress, but it didn't work. Miss Dalton is now the wife of Arthur Hammerstein, New York Theatrical manager. About a year ago he was reportedly engaged to Nora Bayes, vaudeville headliner, but the romance apparently collapsed.

In the marriage license Miss Normand gave her age as 28 and Cody as 39.

They have been offered Hal Roach's yacht *Gypsy* for their honeymoon, but this, apparently, is to be delayed.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, September 18, 1926

Routing a county recorder and county clerk out of bed at 3 o'clock in the morning, Mabel Normand and Lew Cody, both famous on the screen were married early yesterday in Ventura.

Announcement of the ceremony literally stunned Hollywood film circles. Seldom seen in public together and known merely to be good friends, not even intimates of the couple suspected the romance.

The announcement was first made yesterday morning by Cody when he appeared at the Breakfast Club.

"I love Lew--that's all," Mabel said later at the Hal Roach studio. "We have been wonderful friends for years. And last night at my home, he proposed and I accepted him."

According to Cody, the couple had dinner together at Miss Normand's home in Beverly Hills Thursday night when he proposed and was accepted. Escorted by two motorcycle officers and accompanied by Margaret Namara, opera singer, and her husband, Minert Lord, they drove to Ventura.

There they awakened County Clerk H. E. Hollowell, procured a license, and then got County Recorder Thomas H. Meiland, who performed the ceremony.

On the marriage license Lew's age was given as 39, that of Miss Normand at 28.

According to Miss Normand the romance started more than eight years ago when the two played in "Mickey." Lew Cody entered motion pictures in 1916. He is the divorced husband of Dorothy Dalton, one-time screen favorite. He is under contract to the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios. This is Miss Normand's first marriage.

Miss Normand who is making comedies for Hal Roach last week completed "One Hour Married."

The couple intend to visit Honolulu on their honeymoon, which they say will begin in several days by special arrangement with the studio officials. They will stay there a month or so and then return to Los Angeles until Cody finishes his picture, "The Grey Hat."

Kiss! Kiss! Kiss! 1316 for Mabel

Mabel Normand believes in the old Spanish custom of “kissing the bride” And yesterday she was on the receiving end of more kisses than could be possibly portrayed in ten reels of a flapper-sheik picture.

From noon until the sun was setting Mabel was kissed. At first she was kissed standing up. After the first 509 she was kissed sitting down. She was reported on the verge of a kiss “collapse” when she finally escaped.

According to a studio official who surreptitiously clicked off the number of her osculations, including his own, there were exactly 1316!²¹⁷

* from (Los Angeles) *Illustrated Daily News*, September 18, 1926

Lew Cody, of uncounted feminine conquests on the screen, yesterday picked piquant Mabel Normand, original Mack Sennett girl, as his ideal fireside companion. They were married in Ventura, with Justice Thomas H. Neilandt officiating at 3 in the morning. The ceremony followed a dinner party at Miss Normand’s home.

The petite star, found on the Hal Roach lot, confirmed the announcement made by Cody at the Breakfast club.

“I love Lew, that’s all,” was Miss Normand’s smiling answer to the question concerning the marriage, which came as a surprise to Hollywood.

“We have been wonderful friends for years and I consider him the finest man in the world. Last night, at my home, he proposed and I accepted him.

“He proposed before, but at that time I hesitated thinking it might be a passing infatuation. But time has proven our love substantial.”

* from *Exhibitors Herald*, October 2, 1926

· Photo Advertisement

HAL ROACH presents NAMES WITH BOX-OFFICE DRAWING POWER in TWO REEL COMEDIES that are TRUE FEATURES. (Pathe’ comedy, trademark)²¹⁸

Charley Chase, Vivien Oakland, Lionel Barrymore, Sue O’Neil, Mickey Bennett, Mildred Harris, Oliver Hardy, Eva Novak, Clyde Cook, Katherine Grant, Blanche Mehaffey, Mickey Daniels, Jackie Condon, Theda Bara, Harry Myers, Milla Davenport, Tyler Brooke, James Finlayson, Jay Smith, Helene Chadwick, Creighton Hale, Kay Deslys, Stuart Holmes, Dorothy Dwan, Will Rogers, Mabel Normand, Farina, Olive Borden, Scooter Lowry, Dot Farley, John T. Murray, Eileen Percy, Sidney D’Albrook, Joe Cobb, Lucien Littlefield, Fay Wray, Sally Rand, John Prince, Max Davidson, Mary Kornman, Ethel Clayton, Burr McIntosh, Laura La Varnie, Claude Gillingwater, Sally Long, Syd Crossley, Martha Sleeper, Wm. Orlamond, Charlotte Mineau, Kathleen Collins, Josephine Crowell, Glenn Tryon, Virginia Pearson, Carl Miller, Marceline Day, Mildred June, Lincoln Stedman.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, October 9, 1926

Film Bride Recipient of Shower

Mabel Normand was tendered a surprise bridal shower at the home of Mrs. Abe Lehr, 616 South Kingsley Drive, last night that brought together a feminine film constellation of unusual magnitude. Dinner was followed by bridge, the guests lingering until a late hour.

Among the friends of Miss Normand, who recently became the bride of Lew Cody, and guests of Mrs. Lehr were Mrs. Buster Keaton, Mrs. Frances Marion, Miss Vilma Banky, Ruth Roland, Enid Bennett, Mrs. Harold Lloyd, Mrs. Earle Williams, Miss Sophia Wachner, Hedda Hopper, Mrs. Antonio Moreno, Mrs. Thomas H. Ince, Mrs. Victor Varconi, Mrs. Tom Mix, Mrs. Edwin Schallert and many others.

* from *One Hour Married* synopsis, U. S. Copyright Office, October 26, 1926

Mabel, just married, loses her husband as they emerge from the church, the army taking him to France. As a Red Cross nurse, she steals a general’s uniform and, in disguise, searches for her husband. After many exciting experiences, she finds him in a trench and together they go out to clean up an enemy machine gun nest. After it is over, hubby learns that his buddy is his wife and as a reward they get a ten-day leave in Paris.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, November 3, 1926

Star’s Suit For Damage Dismissed

Dismissal of the \$500,000 libel suit filed by Mabel Normand, screen actress, against Mrs. Georgia W. Church has been ordered by the State Supreme Court as the result of a stipulation by attorneys for both sides, it was announced yesterday by Deputy Clerk Coultis.

Similar action has been taken in the suits in which the actress sought the right to intervene in the divorce suit Mrs. Church brought against her husband, Norman W. Church, Coultis added.

The controversy between Mrs. Church and Miss Normand started in 1924, when the former filed her divorce complaint and, among other things, asserted while attired in a night dress, that Miss Normand, visited Mr. Church in his room at a local hospital. It was also asserted that the actress kissed Mr. Church good-bye when he left the institution. They were patients at the hospital at the same time in 1923, according to the complaint.

Miss Normand denied the charges and filed an action to give her permission to appear as an intervener in the divorce suit. The Superior Court denied her petition.

The actress then filed a suit asking \$500,000 damages for libel, denying Mrs. Church’s assertions and charging that the statements in the divorce complaint were malicious. The Superior Court dismissed the complaint without leave to amend. Petitions asking the Supreme Court to set aside the orders of the Superior Court were filed by counsel for the actress and the case was waiting hearing when the dismissal was ordered.

²¹⁷ In the final scene of *Suzanna* (1922), Mabel and the groom are obliged to kiss wedding guests according to an “old Spanish custom.”

²¹⁸ Lists stars with accompanying photographs.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, November 17, 1926

Actress Finishes Contract

Mabel Normand, whose recent marriage to Lew Cody was a Hollywood surprise, is through at the Hal Roach Studios, Warren Doane, production manager, stated yesterday, adding that she has completed her contract for five pictures.

Miss Normand shortly afterward denied the statement but it is believed she was referring to the fact that her contract calls for her to remain sixty days subject to call in the event that any "retakes" on her pictures become necessary.

Rumors have been current for several weeks that Miss Normand has been "flirting" with several studios with an eye toward the production of comedies of greater length than the two-reel pictures in which she has been featured of late.

* from *Photoplay*, December 1926

The last word on the Cody-Normand wedding is that Lew says he has been asking Mabel to marry him for years and years. And Mabel had consistently refused. When she finally breathed "Yes," he didn't give her a chance to take another breath, but rushed her to the parson's.

* from *Photoplay*, December 1926

The Wednesday night opening of "Bardelys the Magnificent" was a night for newlyweds. They walked gaily, confidently and gracefully past the entrance of the Cathay Circle Theater. They walked splendidly past the admiring crowds, lining the entrance, and past the arc-light, modestly billed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer as "the largest in the world."

It was a night of newlyweds. Mr. and Mrs. King Vidor; Mr. and Mrs. Lew Cody, Mabel Normand in the white chiffon that befits a bride; Mr. and Mrs. David Midivani, Mae Murray; and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Z. Leonard, Gertrude Olmstead.

Strolling in the lobby during the intermission I saw Willie Dove and Irvin Willat, Richard Barthelmess, Jack Gilbert, Norma Shearer, Greta Garbo in the King Vidor party...

1927

* from *Photoplay*, January 1927

" Dorothy Spensley

from an interview with Lew Cody...He can be romantic when he talks of his meeting with Mabel Normand, whom he recently made his fireside companion. He can be romantic and sentimental and boyish and wholly charming as he says he met her "years and years ago," and then smiles under the teasing mustache, "years ago, you know, when we were very young.

"Mabel promised to meet me on a certain street corner in New York at a certain time. I'm still waiting. But when I met Mabel again in Hollywood I vowed I'd make her pay. I did. I married her. And Mabel says she never enjoyed paying any debt more.

"We intended to take ourselves quite seriously -- Mabel and I. Then one of our friends told Mabel that she certainly had married a big laugh, so," with a shrug of the shoulders, "we couldn't be serious. After all, we're both comedians. Why not laugh? It's nice to be able to laugh, together."

* from publicity press-book for *One Hour Married*, 1927

Of course, General Pershing did not realize that he had Mabel Normand in the army, but General Confusion must have. In her latest Hal Roach comedy, "One Hour Married," which comes...to the...Theatre, Mabel almost disrupts the entire A.E.F. in her mad search for her lost rookie husband, torn from her arms at the very door of the church.

Mabel disguises herself most effectively in a stolen uniform and a false mustache of the walrus variety and conducts a through search of all the trenches and shell-holes, to say nothing of the air lanes, of France. Her nonchalant sorties into No Man's Land, her hair-raising and plane demolishing advent into the sky, her fearless raids upon enemy machine gun nests, constitute one of the brightest chapters in screen comedy.

It is generally accepted that Mabel Normand can extract more real comedy out of a given situation than any other comedienne on the screen, and in "One Hour Married" she overlooks nothing. Her airplane adventure is one of the high spots which will linger long in memory.

"One Hour Married" has already been labeled the fun epic of the army. If anything could have happened to Mabel which didn't during her brief military career, it was merely an oversight. Even cooties have their places in this joyous slice of army life.

Who won the war? Mabel Normand, of course. Sufficient evidence is found in her newest Hal Roach-Pathé comedy, "One Hour Married," which will be a feature of the outstanding bill...at the...Theatre. War pictures may come and war pictures may go, but this military fun opus will live long in the memories of those who see it. As a flapper dough-boy, Mabel has one of the greatest roles of her career. The picture was directed by Jerome Strong under the supervision of F. Richard Jones. The supporting cast includes Creighton Hale, Jimmy Finlayson and Sid Crossley.

"One Hour Married," Mabel Normand's latest Hal Roach comedy coming...to the...Theatre, establishes her as the screen's greatest comedienne. She has a role in this film of fun which is unequalled for comedy opportunities, and it's Mabel's habit to take advantage of every possibility for a laugh. As a girl who disguises herself as a doughboy and gets to the front seeking her lost hubby, she reaches the heights of fun-making. Creighton Hale plays the hubby, while Jimmy Finlayson is excellent as a general. Jerome Strong directed.

Safer playthings than a flashlight out in No Man's Land could be easily thought of as is proven in Mabel Normand's new Hal Roach comedy coming...to the...Theatre. Mabel's antics with one afford one of the highlights of

a great comedy offering. In this, her newest mirth-provoker, she takes full advantage of her novel role, that of a rookie in the A.E.F.

If Uncle Sam had been able to assemble an army of Mabel Normands, the war would have been brought to an abrupt close. In "One Hour Married," the Hal Roach comedy coming.....to the....Theatre, Mabel disguises herself as a doughboy and goes out to win the war. Her adventures in No Man's Land provide the laughs in what is said to be one of her greatest comedy offerings to date. Creighton Hale and Jimmy Finlayson head the supporting cast.

Mabel Normand is utterly in accord with General Sherman. She says war is worse than that. In "One Hour Married," the Hal Roach comedy attraction on the bill....at the...Theatre, she goes to war. And what amusing trouble she doesn't get into isn't worth mentioning. A laugh in every foot of film, it is said. Creighton Hale, Jimmy Finlayson and Noah Young are the principals in the supporting cast. Jerome Strong directed under the supervision of F. Richard Jones.

* from *Should Men Walk Home* synopsis, U. S. Copyright Office, January 14, 1927

The boy and girl, both amateur burglars, join forces and attend a party in search of some famous jewels. After pursuing them all evening, they lose out and promise to go straight. As the boy shakes hands on leaving, a lot of silver falls out of his clothes and they are forced to flee.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 16, 1927

Doctors Hurry Mabel Normand Into Hospital

Mabel Normand, motion picture actress, who has been ill for a week with a bronchial affection [sic] which threatened to develop into pneumonia was taken from her home in Beverly Hills yesterday to the Santa Monica Hospital for treatment.

Despite the steady downpour of rain, physicians admitted Miss Normand's condition is such that it would be dangerous to delay her trip to the hospital longer. She was accompanied by Dr. H. C. Loos, her family physician, and Dr. George Dazey²¹⁹ of Santa Monica.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 17, 1927

Film Star Improving In Health

The condition of Mabel Normand was reported as improved yesterday evening by Drs. H. Clifford Loos and George K. Dazey.

She was taken to the Santa Monica Hospital late Tuesday after being ill for a week at her Beverly Hills home. An X-ray examination disclosed that she was suffering from an abscess of the right lung and broncho pneumonia, and during the forenoon her condition was reported critical by the hospital authorities.

During the early afternoon yesterday, her husband, Lew Cody, was at her bedside and Dr. Dazey, Santa Monica specialist was in constant attendance.

During the latter portion of the afternoon, however, she showed improvement and her physicians expressed the belief that she would continue to mend.

Hundreds of telegrams and telephone inquiries as well as floral tributes from all parts of the country poured into the hospital yesterday afternoon and evening.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 1927

Crisis Past In Fight Of Film Star

With the crisis of her illness passed, Mabel Normand, film actress was declared out of danger last night by attending physicians. She passed the crisis at 9 o'clock last night, they stated, and her temperature is again normal. She is very weak, but smiling and her friends have nothing to fear, according to a statement by Dr. George K. Dazey, Santa Monica specialist, after a consultation with Dr. H. Clifford Loos of Los Angeles.

She spent a restful forenoon yesterday, partook of fruit juices and coffee for breakfast and her condition has so far improved by afternoon that her husband, Lew Cody, left the Santa Monica Hospital and returned to his home in Beverly Hills. He is in constant communication with her by telephone.

Early yesterday morning after her temperature dropped, she enjoyed a restful sleep.

Her secretary, Julia Brew, is in attendance at the hospital and answers all telephone calls and receives all visitors who are not allowed to see the patient.

The film comedian was taken to the Santa Monica Hospital on Tuesday, last, suffering with bronchial pneumonia and believed to be suffering with an abscess of the right lung. This, however, has proved to be nothing more than a congested condition, her physicians said.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 1927

Actress On Mend After Pneumonia

²¹⁹ Dazey's practice included many movie folk, and it has been unofficially alleged that he supplied some stars with illicit narcotics, including Mabel Normand. In 1931 he unsuccessfully filed suit against the Normand estate for purported unpaid bills, relating to thirty six professional visits he had made to the Normand home in 1927 and 1928. Most interesting, in 1940, District Attorney Burton Fitts office brought charges against Dazey for allegedly murdering his wife, Doris Scwuchow Dazey. Her death was first interpreted as suicide. However, a number of reports came forward from people, claiming to be eye witnesses, who said it was murder. The motive alleged for the murder was that Walter Kendall, Dazey's son was not actually his child at all but sired by another. Though ultimately acquitted, Dazey lived to 1943, when he died on pneumonia. The story behind this case is as eerie and lurid as any of the Hollywood mystery scandals. And despite the court's verdict, Dazey's guilt or innocence have never been far from ever being satisfactorily established. And even if he was innocent of the crime as he claimed, there still remains a great puzzle as to how the "conspiracy," from which he alleges the charges and accusations sprang, exactly ever came about. *Special thanks to Patrick Jennings for his concise 11 page account of Dazey's career and murder trial, "Bay City Doctor," from which this information was taken.*

Santa Monica -- Mabel Normand was reported to be recovering today at the Santa Monica Hospital, after passing the crisis yesterday in a severe case of bronchial pneumonia complicated by pleurisy and an abscess in the right lung.

This morning at 7:55 the screen actress talked with her mother in New York over long distance telephone and was said to have chatted with the cheerfulness she has displayed throughout her illness. The bill for the telephone conversation was \$17. Her temperature was slightly higher this morning, after having been reduced to 98.6 deg. normal, late yesterday. This increase, however, was believed to be only temporary and to be expected intermittently in such cases.

Dr. George Dazey, associated with Dr. H. Clifford Loos in the case, stated yesterday that he had not at any time considered his patient in a critical condition and there had been no alarm felt for her recovery. Her temperature of 101 early this morning was due to the violet-ray treatment she had taken, hospital attendants said.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 20, 1927

Mabel Normand On Road To Recovery

Officials of Santa Monica Hospital today reported the condition on Mabel Normand, film actress, as "greatly improved."

Miss Normand was reported by her physicians as having passed the crisis Thursday in a severe case of bronchial pneumonia, complicated by pleurisy and lung abscess. Her temperature was 100, this morning, a decrease of 1 deg. under that of yesterday, and her respiration 44. The hospital, attaches said, was being besieged by inquiries as to the condition of their patient.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 1, 1927

Ailment Conquered by Mabel Normand

Mabel Normand, whose life hung in the balance for ten days from bronchial pneumonia was reported to be convalescing rapidly in Santa Monica Hospital yesterday. Miss Normand will be able to leave the hospital in a week, it was announced by her physicians, Drs. George K. Dazey and M. Clifford Loos [sic]. The film comedienne plans to spend several weeks resting in the desert climate at Palm Springs after leaving the hospital.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 1927

Mabel Normand to Leave Hospital Soon

Santa Monica, March 8 -- Mabel Normand, convalescing from a long illness at Santa Monica Hospital, where she had a serious attack of bronchial pneumonia, was reported this morning to be recovered sufficiently to leave the hospital within a few days. Miss Normand, according to her physician, plans to spend several weeks at Palm Springs.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 28, 1927

Miss Normand Finally Able to Leave Hospital

Santa Monica, March 27 -- Mabel Normand, film actress, left the Santa Monica Hospital today for her home in Beverly Hills. Miss Normand had been ill for several months with bronchial pneumonia. Her physicians, Drs. George K. Dazey and H. Clifford Loos, said her condition is much improved, but trips to the hospital at intervals for treatment will still be necessary.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, April 23, 1927

Mabel And Lew To Travel

Stars Plan Extended Trip in Europe During Summer

By Grace Kingsley

Plans to go abroad during the summer are being made by Mabel Normand and her husband, Lew Cody, the latter a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer star. A stay of a couple of months in Europe is being contemplated. Mabel is not to work in pictures for several months to come.

The above was learned yesterday, when Mr. Cody, in the interim of playing no less than three parts for M-G-M, took a minute or two to chat in his dressing room.

"I do not want Mabel to work again until she is thoroughly well and strong," declared Cody. "She is still weak from her recent illness.

"We both love Europe, and both have many friends and acquaintances there. We shall stay, probably, most of the time in London and Paris, but may take further trips also."

The trip altogether depends, however, on whether the star can catch up with his schedule of pictures for M-G-M, on which he is now behind. But making two pictures at a time, in one of which he plays two roles, should certainly aid in satisfying the thirst now suffered for a sight of Lew on the part of his many fans.

In the meantime, Mr. and Mrs. Lew Cody are looking for a house which shall be satisfactory to them, both preferably in Beverly Hills. Lew complains that there aren't closets enough in either of their houses at present for both of their wardrobes!

* from (Periodical source unknown at present), August 1927

Mabel Normand is back home and well again after the long siege of illness she suffered. To celebrate her return -- both to health and home -- the rollicking Mabel and her equally fun loving husband, Lew Cody, "threw" a party in their Beverly Hills home recently that proved to be more than a mere party -- it was a glittering social event. Filmdom's entire Who's Who, it seemed was present at the affair -- and then some. Lookit some of the guests! Anna Q. Nilsson, Fannie Ward, Ina Claire, Ruth Roland, Ben Bard, Fannie Brice, Nellie Revell, Edwin Carewe, Hunt Stromberg, Harry Rapf, Lottie Pickford, Eileen Percy, Allan Forest, Kathleen Clifford, Gertrude Olmstead, Robert Z. Leonard, Diana Miller, George Melford, Marcel de Sano, Helen Delaine, Belle Bennett, Monte Blue, Gertrude Astor, Clarence Brown, George Pallas, and many, many others. A continuous houseful until dawn, in fact. Somebody asked

Lew if he had ever played in the stage version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Whereupon Mabel, overhearing the query, piped up, "Of course, he did -- he played one of the twelve Apostles."

* from *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 1927

Comedienne Has Attack Of Pleurisy

Mabel Normand, film comedienne, was removed from her Beverly Hills home to the Santa Monica Hospital Monday night, according to her personal physician, Dr. George K. Dazey, is suffering with pleurisy and influenza, and is quite ill. Dr. Dazey, however, denied her condition is critical.

Miss Normand was in the hospital in February and March of this year with a similar ailment, and her life was despaired of for ten days. She apparently fully recovered then, however, and was reported to be convalescing satisfactorily at her home.

Lew Cody, husband of the actress, is out of the city shooting scenes for his new picture, and has not yet been summoned to his wife's side.

* from *Lincoln State Journal*, Friday, August 5, 1927

Mabel Normand, screen actress, is dangerously ill of influenza at a Santa Monica, Calif., Hospital. She was taken there in an ambulance from her home in Beverly Hills and hospital attaches said her condition was more dangerous than when she suffered a breakdown several months ago.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, November 6, 1927

Mabel Normand Loses Diamond In Capitol

Washington -- Mabel Normand, motion picture actress lost a diamond necklace, her husband, Lew Cody, who is appearing at a local theater, advised police last night. The pendant valued at \$2000, Mr. Cody said, was lost between the Williard Hotel and Le Paradis Wednesday night.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 1927

Lew Cody Denies Plan to Divorce Mabel Normand

Omaha -- Lew Cody, cinema actor, denied through his manager today that he and his wife, Mabel Normand are planning a divorce. Mr. Cody is appearing at a local theater. He will return to the coast after playing in Kansas City, his manager said.

* from *Los Angeles Record*, December 2, 1927

Lew and Mabel To Join Houses

Mabel Normand and Lew Cody will give up their separate residences and make their marriage more conventional by occupying one house, the actress declared here today in denying reports that she and Cody had separated.

Miss Normand arrived here last night from the east, making the trip west on the same train with Constance Talmadge, who recently obtained a divorce in Scotland.

Cody is now playing a vaudeville engagement in Omaha, but his wife reports that he will be home for the holidays.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, December 2, 1927

Mabel and Lew Separated ¾ by Distance Only

Separated?

Be your size, big boy. That's just a lot of apple butter.

Of course, they're separated as only two weeks and 2000 miles can separate a man and wife.

But he's coming home for Christmas. She arrived yesterday.

And what's more, they're going to live together in his house instead of she living in hers and he in his as they have done since their marriage.

Who's this we're talking about?

Why, Mabel and Lew, of course -- Mabel Normand and Lew Cody.

Mabel came home on the Santa Fe Chief from New York, but Lew has another week in vaudeville in Omaha and another in Minneapolis or some place.

They had quite a nice time coming west, for Constance Talmadge returning from Scotland where she got a divorce, and her mother were on the same train, Norma Talmadge met them at the station.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, December 2, 1927

Miss Normand corroborated the statement issued in Omaha last week, by her husband, Lew Cody, to the effect that both are enjoying domestic happiness and do not plan a divorce, as has been rumored in Hollywood for several months.

Miss Normand elaborated on her husband's statement to the extent to say that instead of maintaining separate establishments, as they have done since their marriage, in Ventura two years ago, they will live in Miss Normand's Beverly Hills home upon Mr. Cody's return from the East two weeks hence, following completion of a vaudeville tour.

* from Greta Garbo's autograph book, with pages dated around 1928.

Los Ang. Calif.

Wild parties and hootch are not for me

I like to live a life thats carefree

To study books and improve my mind

Youd never dream I was that kind.

[signed] *Mabel Normand*

1928-1930

* from *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1928

Wisdom Tooth Upsets Mabel's Plans for Trip

A siege with a dentist may spoil what was intended to be a vacation trip to Denver for Mabel Normand. Everything was planned for her to accompany her husband, Lew Cody, to that city where he appears next week to a vaudeville sketch.

Two days ago Miss Normand was informed by her dentist that it would be necessary for her to have a wisdom tooth removed. It was infected to such a degree that she had to remain in a Santa Monica Hospital for two days. Yesterday she returned home and last night neither she nor Cody knew whether she will pack up at the last minute to leave with Lew today or tomorrow.

Cody is going to Denver to complete his tour of the Orpheum Circuit. He recently finished playing here and in San Francisco. He must return to Los Angeles by the first of next month to start work at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio on his first picture under his new contract which is to be directed by Mal St. Clair.

On his return from the East to Hollywood after appearing in vaudeville Cody patched up his difficulties with M.G.M. and signed a new contract.

* from *Photoplay*, December 1928

" Harry Lang

From an interview with Hollywood psychic George Dareos, discussing the stars who come to him for psychic readings

"...I know all the stars--they all come to see me," Dareos went on. "Mabel Normand, Alice and Marceline Day, Clarie Windsor, Olive Borden, Jetta Goudal, Joan Crawford..."

* from *Photoplay*, June 1928

When Lew Cody was on vaudeville tour in Kansas City, a young boy asked him to endorse a picture.

"I'm coming to Hollywood some day," the lad boasted.

"Come and see me," Lew responded kindly.

The other morning Mabel Normand answered the door of the Cody home. Lew was on location.

On the steps stood a small bedraggled person. Portions of the rear of his trousers were missing; his toes came through his shoes.

"Are you Mrs. Cody?" Mabel nodded, "I'm Cordill Tray. Mr. Cody asked me to come and visit him," and the lad produced the autographed picture as his card of introduction.

He had walked to Hollywood from Kansas City.

MABEL bought him a new suit, fed him five orders of bacon and eggs at one sitting and gave him a place to sleep until her husband's return. Now he is working in the Cody household. "The telephone boy" they call him.

Now don't start a stampede west, boys, for Cody says he is finished. He has seven such people on his payroll already. When he goes to the studio his entrance is in the way of a procession. Directly behind the actor walks the chauffeur, an ex-service man. Then Mortimer Snow, once a well-known actor, now custodian of Lew's dog. Then Cordill carrying the telephones number. The generosity of Mabel and Lew is not just a legend.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, December 17, 1928

Wife Makes Own Picture for Lew Cody

For the first time since her retirement from the screen months ago, Mabel Normand, once-popular actress, appeared last week before a camera for the making of a motion picture.

The film she made was a production which she personally directed and penned herself. It is going to be a Christmas present for her husband, Lew Cody, who sailed yesterday for Europe for a vaudeville tour in England and France.

Lew and Mabel will be separated over the holidays so she took a camera man, George Nogel, at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio into her confidence and "shot" her "little play."

The story is a secret known only to herself and the camera man. She will ship the film so that it will reach Cody before Christmas with a seal on it "Do not open until Christmas."

* from *New York Times*, March 17, 1929

Mabel Normand Stricken

While Lew Cody, film star, is making the transcontinental train journey from New York back to his home here, in an invalid chair, his wife, Mabel Normand, herself was stricken. Miss Normand is under care of Dr. E. C. Fishbaugh in the Cody home in Beverly Hills, and her condition is serious. According to the physician, the film actress began to fail gradually in January. "She has since grown considerably weaker and lost in weight," Dr. Fishbaugh said, "but we do not expect an immediate crisis. Rest and attention may do much for her."

While the physician did not specify Miss Normand's illness, other than that she suffered from a collapse, friends who called at her home, stated that they were informed that the former star has contracted an infection of the lungs. Miss Normand won a close fight for life when stricken with pleuro-pneumonia two years ago.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 20, 1929

Actress' Condition Grave

Plans were being made yesterday for the removal of Mabel Normand once a star of the motion-picture world, to a sanatorium near Los Angeles to aid her in her desperate fight against tuberculosis. Her physician is to hold a consultation today at the Normand-Lew Cody home in Beverly Hills to determine which resort she will be taken to.

Although she has been confined to her bed since January, the real cause of her illness was kept from the public for personal reasons and it was not until yesterday it was disclosed that the former actress is a victim of lung trouble. X-ray pictures taken recently revealed both of Miss Normand's lungs are infected and that she is in a serious condition.

Miss Normand probably will be taken to a sanatorium near Whittier, according to Dr. C. E. Fishbaugh. Her physician yesterday said there is much hope for her recovery if she responds to treatment prescribed for her.

Miss Normand, according to her physician, is being kept in strict seclusion and is not allowed visitors nor is anybody except her nurse and private secretary allowed in her room. Only once according to intimate friends, has she been able to leave her sickroom since January. During this time she has spent the hours reading novels.

Cody, her husband is now recuperating at a health resort near San Bernardino from a complete nervous breakdown which followed an attack of influenza contracted while in New York while he was making arrangements for a vaudeville tour in Europe. At about the same time Miss Normand was stricken in Beverly Hills with influenza also, this illness hastening the condition which now exists.

Neither Miss Normand nor Cody knows the true condition of the other, news of their respective illnesses being kept from the other so as not to hinder the progress of their recovery. At the home in Beverly Hills yesterday it was reported that Miss Normand has rested more easily during the past forty-eight hours than in weeks.

Her fight has been hindered considerably, it is said, by a fever which for days has remained at 102. This is said to be abating, indicating that she is gaining a little strength. Many of her intimate friends are optimistic about her condition.

It is expected that Cody will be able to leave the health resort in a week or ten days.

Miss Normand was one of the screen's most prominent figures in the days when she was starred by Mack Sennett. She and Cody were married at Ventura in September, 1926.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 1929

Sanatorium Trip Balked By Actress

Because she is responding so rapidly to treatment Mabel Normand yesterday forestalled her trip to a sanatorium to wage her fight against tuberculosis. The suggestion that she leave her home in Beverly Hills for a health resort was met yesterday by refusals from her, according to friends.

Efforts are being made to persuade Miss Normand to go to a sanatorium suggested by her attending physician, to recover her health which received a setback last January, when she was stricken with influenza.

Tuesday night, according to Dr. C. E. Fishbaugh, the former filmland star spent her best night in many weeks.

It is believed by her friends that Miss Normand does not want to leave her home in Beverly Hills until her husband, Lew Cody, film actor, is able to go to her bedside. At present Cody is at a health resort near San Bernardino recuperating from an attack of influenza which he contracted in New York while making arrangements for a vaudeville trip to Europe. Cody is expected back in Hollywood within the coming week.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 22, 1929

Cody Told Of Wife's Condition

Lew Cody, motion picture actor, learned for the first time yesterday of the true condition of his wife, Mabel Normand, one-time star of the screen world, who is waging a desperate fight against tuberculosis. He was advised by Miss Normand's physician, Dr. C. E. Fishbaugh, who telephoned to Palm Springs, where Cody is recuperating after a serious siege with influenza.

According to information obtained yesterday, Dr. Fishbaugh revealed to Cody the nature of Miss Normand's illness and that she is in a serious condition although there is no immediate danger, Cody was informed that Miss Normand is receiving the best medical attention and that during the past several days she has responded to treatment better than at any time in weeks.

Dr. Fishbaugh declared last evening that Miss Normand's fever is fast abating that even though it is difficult to notice any definite change in her condition from day to day, she is sleeping better and resting more easily. It is possible that later on Miss Normand may be removed to a near-by sanatorium to wage her battle for health.

Cody went to Palm Springs immediately on his arrival in Los Angeles from New York, where he was stricken and became dangerously ill. Word yesterday from the springs was to the effect that Cody is fast recovering his health and is expected back in Hollywood within a few weeks.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1929

Mabel Normand Gains Strength in Life Fight

Mabel Normand, once popular as a screen star, slowly is gaining strength in her fight against tuberculosis, according to reports yesterday. Her physician, Dr. C. E. Fishbaugh, and close friends say she has rested more comfortably in the past week than in several months.

Her husband, Lew Cody, who is recuperating at Palm Springs from a breakdown, also is on the road to recovery and expects soon to return to Hollywood to be near Miss Normand. It will be several weeks, however, before he can expect to return, it is said.

Miss Normand is eating more regularly and it is believed she has passed the crisis.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 1929

Mabel Normand and Lew Cody Both Recovering

Mabel Normand has passed the crisis of her illness and is now able to leave her sickroom, according to what was learned from friends yesterday. Lew Cody, her husband, visits her nearly every day now. He, too, is in a much improved condition.

Although Miss Normand is able to leave her sickroom she has not yet been able to go out of the house and will not do so for some time. Several months ago she became dangerously ill from tuberculosis.

Cody is still occupying a house at the beach until he completely recovers from a breakdown which followed an attack of influenza in New York.

* from *Photoplay*, June 1929

The Butterfly Man And The Little Clown

By Adela Rogers St. Johns

The sad love story of two gay and gallant stars.

The man who loved life. And the girl who loved laughter. Surely, surely, a romance between those two should have spelled happiness.

Yet Mabel Normand lies seriously ill at her home in Hollywood, and out on the desert, Lew Cody is fighting a desperate battle for strength to go to her.

They called him the butterfly man on the twenty-four sheets that acclaimed his witty, worldly pictures.

And we who knew her called her the beautiful clown.

They met and laughed together. Laughter ripened into a friendship, and friendship ripened into love and love suggested marriage -- at three o'clock upon a September morning almost three years ago.

Their wedding march was a dance tune and in gay, golden bubbles they drank their marriage toast.

We read about it in the morning paper. We were a little surprised. After all, we hadn't realized that Lew and Mabel were in love. They had seemed almost too good friends to be in love. Then, when the surprise had passed, we were delighted. It seemed such a natural, right thing. Lew would take of Mabel and Mabel would take care of Lew. -- Their home would be full of life and laughter -- splendid place to drop in for wit and gaiety and good fellowship.

But sometimes two and two don't make four.

That is why some folks call life a game.

The love story of Mabel Normand and Lew Cody has not, so far, had the happy ending which we had written for it.

No one -- least of all Lew and Mabel -- knows what lies beyond. Somehow they seem now to stand hand in hand against a slowly darkening sky.

There is confetti yet in Mabel's dark curls -- bright, silly stuff.

Her tiny feet are bound fast with yards and yards of the colored paper ribbons that clutter dance floors after a party.

Her eyes are twin graves of laughter. And nothing is so sad as dead laughter.

Under the elegant motley he has always worn, Lew's shoulders seem to sag with despair. For life doesn't come to you. You have to go out and meet it and Lew can no longer do that. He has always gone forth gallantly to meet life -- the good and the bad, the successes and the failures, the lean days and the fat ones.

Looking at Lew in the game of life you could never tell whether he was winning or losing. Only being denied a seat at the table has brought him to despair. But the candle he burned so brightly -- "my candle burns at both ends, it will not last the night, but oh, my friends, and ah, my foes, it gives a lovely light" -- is very, very low.

Only a miracle, the doctors say, can bring Mabel back to health.

But, where Mabel is concerned, I want to believe in miracles. I want to believe in some kind hand that will reach down and lift up that tragic, helpless little figure -- the most tragic of all Hollywood's broken idols -- and put it back at the start of things again. Surely somewhere -- if not here, somewhere else -- a kindly God can turn back the hands of the clock just a few brief years and let Mabel start all over again. It doesn't seem much to ask for the girl who never did harm to anyone in all her life.

It seems that whatever power planned things in the beginning owes Mabel something for giving her that divine gift of laughter and then sending her through life without any protection from the ruthless parasites, the selfish sycophants, the birds of prey that hover over the gay, the talented, the generous.

Mabel Normand was the greatest comedienne the screen ever knew. I would not dare to make that statement upon my own opinion alone. I heard it said first by Charlie Chaplin. No one, I think, would dispute his authority. I have heard it said often since by those who should know.

Yet today when she lies so desperately ill we remember that it is years since we saw her on the screen since "Mickey" delighted us past measure. She has been out of pictures for years, when her great talent should have been keeping pace with the development of the motion picture art. Today she should occupy the place among the women of the screen that Chaplin holds among the men.

But Mabel is proof positive that women are not able to meet the world as men meet it. Physically and professionally she broke under the things piled up against her. We are the losers, for we, too, have lost Mabel's gift of laughter.

Perhaps there will be a miracle.

I know. Who better? I am proud to say that I have been her friend since first she came to the land of motion pictures from some factory in Brooklyn, a mingling of youth and beauty and laughter that fairly took our breath away.

I know what is chalked up against her.

A lot of hot-headed, wild, young foolishness such as most of the flaming youth of today has to grow out of.

But bad luck rode beside her on the highway.

She got herself into messes that made great headlines. Her friends got her into things. Mabel has always been the fall guy. She never got away with anything in her life. There are plenty of girls in the world who have done in fact the things Mabel was only suspected of, and they have righted themselves and gone on. But Mabel had no balance, no perspective, no cold streak through her warm emotionalism to teach her how to handle life.

More brains and less sense than any woman I ever knew -- that is what I would say of Mabel.

You don't hear about that brilliant, fascinating, cultured brain of Mabel's. Mention any of the great books of the past ten years, either in French or English. She has read them and she has thoughts about them almost as interesting as the books themselves.

You don't know that, even in these last years when Mabel has been far from herself, there are a dozen of the cleverest men and women in Hollywood who delighted to spend a quiet evening before her fireside, talking books and music, and men and world affairs.

You don't know that all Hollywood, from the topmost rung of the ladder to the depths of the lowest gutter, is spangled with Mabel's enormous charity. Real charity -- for it came from a purse that was often empty, from a heart that was near breaking, from a mind that always managed to find some good in everyone, even those who found no good in her.

You don't hear how, in the old days, Mabel brought her divine gift of laughter into our dark days -- and how she could, in some way, make laughter synonymous with courage.

The world doesn't know those things and even in Hollywood, they have been too easily forgotten.

But the world knows, and Hollywood, which has become very self-protective and a little smug with success, remembers a lot of other things and that remembrance has weighed upon Mabel and broken her.

William Desmond Taylor and his murder!

How that thing did cling to Mabel's skirts for years because she was the last person known to have seen him alive.

If she told me herself that she knew who shot Bill Taylor, I wouldn't believe her. And let me tell you that there were two nights, one on the long distance telephone to Chicago, one in a house in Altadena soon after the tragedy, when I believe that if Mabel had known who shot him, she would have told me.

When you come right down to it, what was there about Mabel's connection with the Taylor murder that should have been held against her? She had dropped in to see her friend, Bill Taylor. Mabel had many men friends. Later, that same night, someone killed him.

Then that thing about the young clubman from Denver -- was his name Courtland Dines?

A crazy kid chauffeur who idolized Mabel, as does everyone who ever worked for her, shot Dines. In his stupid fashion, he thought he was protecting Mabel. Instead, he involved her in another mess. But Mabel understood the motive back of his silly interference and she stood by him at some cost to herself.

The worst indictment against Mabel is that she has been foolish, that she wasted and allowed others to waste her great spirit. But on the other side are those things of which Paul speaks in the greatest passage in the Bible -- the 13th chapter in his Epistle to the Corinthians. That should be Mabel's "swan song."

Do you remember it -- "Faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these is love. Love suffereth long and is kind. Seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil."

Mabel came to us a young, uneducated girl. She became a great personality, a star and an unusually brilliant woman. The she faded into oblivion and we lost her bright image.

Scandal and tragedy haunt those years, but not a single accusation of unkindness, ill temper, meanness, selfishness, envy or betrayal. The craft and the malice and the trickery of life. They were too much for the little clown who never understood nor expected them.

They won't let anyone see Mabel now, in her Beverly Hills home where she lies so ill and wasted.

Do you know why?

Because she is so touched and grateful that anyone remembers her that the wasting fever climbs up and up to a danger point. Even flowers bring tears of joy and appreciation to the laughter-loving eyes -- and Mabel has no tears left except those that come from her very heart and her poor heart has all it can do these days to keep pace with life.

It is cowardly, but I am glad that I cannot see her. Because it hurts so to think of Mabel in that pitiful state, with all the great things that her life should have meant, undone. I know how brave her eyes would be, and how the ghost of laughter would rise in them, and how that haunting little voice would remember to speak only of her joy in my happiness.

Perhaps Lew in his struggle to win back enough health to leave his desert, feels something like that. Understanding life as he does, he understands Mabel. I think he married her to protect her -- in one of those gallant gestures of his. But he wasn't strong enough.

So the romance of the butterfly man and the beautiful clown has come to its unhappy ending. The screen lacks, and will lack for some time, perhaps forever, two people who gave much happiness and who, so far as their work was concerned, always gave their best.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, October 3, 1929

Mabel Normand Fights For Life At Sanatorium

Mabel Normand, once a star of the motion picture world, has been a patient for the past three weeks in the Pottenger Sanatorium in Monrovia, where she is making a desperate fight against tuberculosis, according to an announcement yesterday by her physician, Dr. Frank M. Pottenger, who said her condition is serious.

"Miss Normand has been critically ill for several months," Dr. Pottenger said, "and although she has made some improvement in the last two weeks her condition still is serious." Dr. Pottenger added that it is impossible to tell now what the outcome of her illness will be, or how long she will remain at the sanatorium.

The first announcement of Miss Normand's condition was made in March, when it was revealed she had been a victim of tuberculosis since January, and that X-ray photographs indicated that both lungs were infected. She has been reported suffering from a series of illnesses for the past two years, and at various times was said to be suffering from attacks of influenza and pleurisy.

Her husband, Lew Cody, was stricken early in the year, almost at the same time Miss Normand's condition alarmed her friends and he spent some time at a health resort recuperating from a breakdown, brought on it was declared, as the result of an illness contracted in New York. At that time he was making engagements for a European vaudeville tour.

Four days ago Cody announced he has recovered sufficiently to resume his work in the studios at Hollywood, and that he will again appear before the camera in about two weeks. At that time he announced that Miss Normand was progressing satisfactorily.

Miss Normand was one of the screen's most prominent figures until the last few years. She and Cody were married at Ventura in September, 1926.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, December 18, 1929

Miss Normand Fights Grimly for Her Health

The condition of Mabel Normand, once one of the screen's most prominent actresses, yesterday was reported serious in the desperate fight she is making for life at the Pottenger Sanatorium at Monrovia, where she has been under treatment for several months.

"We have noticed a slight change recently that might be regarded as improvement," Dr. Francis M. Pottenger, said, "but Miss Normand's condition is serious."

First announcement of Miss Normand's condition was made last March, when it was said she had been a victim of tuberculosis since January, with probable infection of both lungs.

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, January 14, 1930

Miss Normand Too Ill For Taylor Quiz

By James Adam

The memory of the William Desmond Taylor murder mystery continues to pursue Mabel Normand as she battles for her life within a sanatorium in a picturesque wooded canyon of this little Southern California town.

With the Taylor case again in the police eye and her name once again thrust into the spotlight, the once foremost comedienne of the screen, however, is far too ill, according to her physician, to be disturbed by questioning.

"The shock of such a thing might result fatally, and we can't afford to take any chances," explained the doctor, Francis M. Pottenger.

In fact, no visitors are allowed to see her at all with the exception of her husband, Lew Cody, film actor, whom she married three and a half years ago after a romantic midnight elopement.

By a queer twist of fate, Miss Normand was the last person known to have seen and talked to Taylor before he was shot to death in his bungalow court apartment in Los Angeles nearly eight years ago.

Ever since that time she has been pursued by the specter of the tragedy which dimmed her screen career apparently forever.

No longer is she the piquant and vivacious Mabel of old, but a frail young woman whose entire life now is hemmed in by the bare walls of her room in the sanatorium.

Only in her pain-wracked fever dreams can she re-live the glory of her screen triumph and her life of pleasure among Hollywood's celebrities.

Among those brilliant figures none stands out in her mind more clearly than William Desmond Taylor, the cultured Englishman and film director who opened for her the whole realm of literature and classical drama.

It was to return a book she had borrowed that the actress went to Taylor's home and saw him for the last time in life.

"Miss Normand told all she knew of the Taylor case at the time it was first investigated," said her secretary, Mrs. Julia Benson, who is her constant companion. "She has told that story time and time again and has nothing new to relate now."

The fact that the mystery is again under investigation has been kept from the patient the secretary added.

"We read to her -- the nurses and I -- but we have not mentioned anything of Mr. Taylor's death to her," she explained, "and Miss Normand never talks about it."

The actress is waging her fight for life against the ravages of the white plague. Both her lungs are affected and she has made a wonderful fight -- the most wonderful of any patient I ever had.

"She is holding her own but it is just a question of how long she can do it and whether she will get better or worse.

"She has been ill so long, but we haven't yet given up hope for her recovery."

Wintry weather, accompanied by rain and snow during the last few days here has tended to retard any improvement in her condition, according to the physician, who has prescribed complete rest for her.

Miss Normand has not been forgotten by her friends as is attested by the flowers, messages and letters of cheer that arrive for her daily.

Any many come from strangers, her admirers, who still recall her antics on the screen when she was the adorable "Mickey" and made millions laugh.

At Christmas time season's greetings came to her from all over the world and she acknowledged all of them through her secretary.

The dark-haired Mabel, with the big brown eyes, always did have the faculty of making friends -- and keeping them.

She was first stricken ill about three years ago with pneumonia but recovered. Then a year ago she went to a card party given by Mrs. Roscoe Arbuckle.

There she contracted cold which developed into pneumonia and tuberculosis. For months she was confined in her home at Beverly Hills, but finally was prevailed upon to go to the sanatorium last September.

What will be the final outcome of her illness, only time can tell.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 1930

Mabel Normand and Cody Sued

Lew Cody, film actor, and his wife, Mabel Normand, actress, are named defendants in a suit for \$1200 filed yesterday in Municipal Court. The money is asserted to be due for medical services rendered by Dr. Frank E. Smith of New York.

Dr. Smith asserts that the account has been due jointly from Cody and Miss Normand since January 21, 1929. The amount originally due was \$1485, of which \$285 has been paid, he declares.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 5, 1930

Actress To Have Blood Transfused

Although Mabel Normand, former screen star, who is a patient at Pottenger's Sanatorium in Monrovia, has made some slight headway recently in her battle against tuberculosis, Dr. F. M. Pottenger, after consultation with Dr. E. C. Fishbaugh, has decided that a blood transfusion will be advisable to improve her condition, he said yesterday. The transfusion will be performed today or tomorrow.

Miss Normand has been a patient at the Monrovia Sanatorium since March, 1929. Since January of that year, however, it had been feared that she was a victim of tuberculosis and subsequent X-ray examination revealed infection in both lungs. The appearance of the disease followed several attacks of influenza and pleurisy.

After entering the sanatorium, Miss Normand responded to the treatment although as recently as December of last year, her condition was still regarded as serious. Dr. Pottenger said yesterday that there had been some improvement lately and he hopes for an even more marked change for the better following the blood transfusion.

Miss Normand was told yesterday of the death of her father, Claude G. Normand, on Monday at his home, 125 St. Mark's Place, New Brighton, Staten Island. He was a victim of pneumonia. Mr. Normand was a native of Quebec, Can., and was 59 years of age.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 7, 1930

Mabel Normand Given New Blood by Transfusion

Miss Mabel Normand, former film actress, was given one pint of new blood yesterday morning in a transfusion administered by Dr. Walter Brem at Pottenger's Sanatorium, where he has been a tuberculosis patient for the past ten months.

"Before the transfusion," said Dr. F. M. Pottenger, "Miss Normand was feeling better than she had for some time and she withstood the ordeal very well, but the permanent results of the process will be very slow and it will be some time before we can tell what benefit she will receive from the transfusion."

The blood was obtained from a man, whose name was not given.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 8, 1930

Mabel Normand Resting Quietly

Mabel Normand passed a very comfortable night on Thursday following a blood transfusion administered earlier in the day by Dr. Walter Brem at Pottenger's Sanatorium, where she has been a tuberculosis patient for the past ten months. This word was given out yesterday by her secretary, who said, Miss Normand was resting quietly and appeared to be in a cheerful frame of mind.

It still is too soon to tell what the effects of the transfusion will be, according to Dr. F. M. Pottenger.

* from *New York Times*, February 24, 1930

MABEL NORMAND, FILM STAR, DEAD

Monrovia, Cal., Feb 23 -- Mabel Normand, whose private and film life offered strangely contrasting roles of tragedy and comedy, died in a sanitarium here at 2:30 A. M. today. She had suffered from tuberculosis since the latter months of 1928. She was in her thirty-third year.²²⁰

Blood transfusions recently resorted to in the hope that they would strengthen Miss Normand's weakened general condition failed, and after an almost imperceptible sinking spell late last night the comedienne died at the Pottenger Sanitarium. Only her secretary, Miss Julia Benson, and a nurse were at her bedside.

Despite her extremely weak condition, Miss Normand was conscious until the last few moments of her life. Scarcely more than an hour before her death she had taken some light nourishment.

Lew Cody, her husband, himself a motion picture star, was notified shortly after her death. Her mother Mrs. Mary Normand, and her sister Gladys, both of Staten Island, N. Y., also were informed. They telegraphed to Los Angeles that they would leave New York immediately for that city.

Except possibly to a few intimates, Miss Normand's death came as a surprise. Recently her physicians had issued bulletins declaring that her ravaged lungs were responding to treatment and that she was improving.

Mabel Normand came to New York from Atlanta, GA., to become an art student and by chance drifted into the infant industry of motion pictures, in which she won her fame. She struggled through the custard pie throwing days of the early comedies to become known as a talented comedienne, switched abruptly to a more serious type of picture and became equally successful in that field. Her entry into motion pictures is the story of an ambitious and talented young art student forced to support herself by any means available while the art studies waited. They continued to wait. While earning a living when she began her art studies she became a model, posing for James Montgomery Flagg, Charles Dana Gibson and Henry Hutt.

The death of P. F. Collier indirectly changed the course of her life. As she told of the incident later, she was released early by Mr. Gibson, for whom she was posing that day, when he was called down town because of Mr. Collier's death. She went to the Fashion Camera Studio, where many of the models used to obtain extra jobs posing for pictures as fashion models.

While there she met Alice Joyce, who tried to induce her to go to the Biograph Studios. Miss Normand was satisfied with things as they were and the new venture of motion pictures did not appeal to her, but on the next day, when Mr. Gibson was still unable to work, she reported at the studio and was put to work by D. W. Griffith. She worked through the Summer until the company went to California for the Winter and then shifted to Vitagraph, but returned to Biograph the next year.

It was not until she joined the Mack Sennett troupe turning out the famous Keystone comedies that she became generally known, however. Miss Normand contended that it was she who first noticed the work of Charles Chaplin and induced Mack Sennett to give him a contract. At that time she had become quite popular and was well on the way to stardom. Later she and Chaplin made many pictures together.

²²⁰ Her death certificate lists the cause of death as Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

After several years in comedies she turned to more serious parts. This sudden shift, in which she left a field in which she had been successful to try a new and uncertain field, was regarded as foolish by many. But her success in the new field was just as great as it had been in comedies. As a Goldwyn star she increased her reputation.

A five-year stage contract with A. H. Woods was announced for Miss Normand in 1925.

Miss Normand's pictures became a storm center in women's clubs throughout the country after the murder of William Desmond Taylor, a moving picture director, in February, 1922. Miss Normand was the last person who had seen him alive. He had escorted her to her car the night before his body was discovered.

After questioning at length by the police and District Attorney Miss Normand was cleared of all suspicion, the District Attorney announced. Meanwhile many cities had refused to permit her films to be shown.

She had another trying episode, although exonerated personally, when Courtland S. Dines, a wealthy Denver oil operator, was shot on New year's Day, 1924, by Miss Normand's chauffeur. Miss Normand and Edna Purviance were at his apartment at the time.

Miss Normand was born on Nov. 10, 1897, at Quebec, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Claude C. [G.] Normand. She was married to Lew Cody early in the morning of Sept. 17, 1926, at Ventura, Cal., following a Hollywood party. Her father died three weeks ago yesterday at the family home, 125 St. Mark's Place, New Brighton, S. I., which Miss Normand had presented to her parents. Besides her mother, a sister, Gladys, and a brother, Claude, survive.²²¹

Mrs. Normand and her daughter Gladys, left their home at 7:15 o'clock last night for Newark Airport to go to the Coast by airplane. Funeral arrangements are to be made by them.

* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 24, 1930

Jim Mitchell

Mabel Normand died yesterday.

The final fadeout of the great motion picture actress' career came at 2:25 a.m., at Pottenger's Sanitarium, Monrovia.

For more than a year she had been ill of tuberculosis. Since last September she had been a patient at the sanitarium, fighting a game but losing battle to regain her health.

Her physicians realized several days ago that she could never again be well and finally Mabel understood. But she fought bravely on, subsisting, her attendants said, on sheer courage.

Shortly after midnight Saturday she took a little nourishment--not because she wanted it, but simply because the doctors ordered it, and she was "being a good soldier."

Her condition became rapidly worse about 2 a.m.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1930

MABEL NORMAND DIES AFTER LENGTHY ILLNESS

Mabel Normand, once the feminine comedy idol of the screen, is dead!

The end, which climaxed a struggle of more than three years to regain her health and prestige in films, came peacefully about 2:30 am yesterday at the Pottenger Sanatorium in Monrovia. Only her private secretary, Mrs. Julia Benson, who had been her closest friend and intimate confidante for many years, and a night nurse were present, since the attendants did not realize the end was at hand.

Several blood transfusions had been administered within the last few weeks and Miss Normand apparently was slowly regaining her vitality. She had been chatting with Mrs. Benson and the nurse and seemed to feel more like her old self than for many months.

"A few minutes before the end came," the secretary said, "she reached over and took my hand in her own and asked me to pray with her. I did as she requested and as I leaned over and whispered in her ear she smiled and closed her eyes as if to go to sleep.

"A moment later the end came, so peacefully and quietly that neither the nurse nor I realized that the little darling was gone. Not even a world of farewell -- only a smile!"

The illness which eventually caused her death began in February, 1927, when Miss Normand was stricken with pneumonia which caused an abscess lung which developed into tuberculosis. For several weeks her physicians and friends despaired of saving her life. No visitors were permitted and even her closest friends were kept informed of her condition only by means of brief bulletins issued at long intervals. At one time a rumor of her death gain wide circulation, but after a long siege, the actress pulled through and apparently had almost regained her health. Within a year she again was stricken, but public announcement of her condition was withheld until her illness became critical. She failed to rally from this second attack and her condition, since early in January of this year, had been regarded as hopeless.

Funeral services were set tentatively for Friday at 11 am from the Church of the Good Shepherd. Father Mullins will officiate with interment to follow in Calvary Cemetery. Cunningham & O'Conner mortuary are in charge of arrangements.

Mrs. Mary Normand, Miss Normand's mother, and a sister, Gladys, were preparing to leave their home Staten Island last night. They are expected to arrive here Thursday morning.

Fear that Lew Cody, her husband, who is himself slowly recovering from a long siege of illness, might suffer a relapse occasioned by the shock of his wife's death, was expressed by friends. He has visited her daily during the months she has been confined at the sanatorium and was at her bedside for several hours on the eve of her death.

²²¹ In 1945, Mabel's brother Claude Drury hanged himself in the basement of the family home at St. Mark's Place. "The family said he was despondent over injuries incurred when a tractor ran over him and crushed his legs while he was working as a carpenter at Halloran Hospital. Thirteen years earlier, in an interview with The [Staten Island] *Advance*, Claude Normand had acknowledged the family suffering brought on by his famous sister's escapades." *Staten Island Advance*, Nov. 8, 1973.

"The suddenness of Mabel's death naturally is a great shock," he said when seen at his home, 609 Maple Drive, Beverly Hills, last evening. "I was with her only a few hours before she passed away and, so far as I know, she had no premonition that the end was so near. We all felt in our hearts, however, that we would probably lose her. My wife exhibited great courage in her struggle to remain with us, but she nor any of us have control over such things."

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1930

Mack Sennett Grieved Over Star's Death

When informed of Mabel Normand's death by newspaper men, Mack Sennett, under whose direction and management she rose to stardom, was visibly affected. He was playing golf on the Brentwood Country club course when the news reached him.

"That is indeed most regrettable," he said. "She was a wonderful character, very generous, and a marvelous little woman. I am deeply pained to hear of her death."

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1930

Hollywood Touched As Gay Spirit Passes

By Edwin Schallert

Mabel Normand is dead!

The heart of the film colony is deeply touched at her passing, and especially that portion of the film colony which knew Mabel during the height of her career as a gay spirit of comedy.

Mabel's whole success as a star was dedicated to making the world laugh with her elfin individuality. Her screen semblance was ever an ideal of merriment, and her fame has never been challenged.

Mabel rose to celebrity in the very earliest days of picturedom. Almost at the time that Mary Pickford was acquiring attention as a serious actress, Mabel had entered the fold of comedy and was to become its leading luminary.

She appeared with Charles Chaplin in many of his earlier short films at Keystone. "In the Park" was one of their more memorable adventures of this period. Mabel contributed highly to its gayety [sic].

Later in "Mickey" she achieved the highest laurels as a feature star. Lew Cody was cast with her in this production and it established her far and wide as not only an idol but as a singularly gifted actress. A romping, tomboyish portrayal she gave in this feature, which was unique for the time.

A contract with the Goldwyn company followed, during which Mabel continued to make feature pictures and then after a time she returned to Mack Sennett's and starred in "Molly-O," which enjoyed a great success and "Suzanna," a romance of early California.

It may be said that "Suzanna" was her last important effort, though she appeared in some short comedies after that. In this and other pictures Mabel was given the tribute not only of the public, but of the critics. She was indeed one of their high favorites.

Ever full of fun, Mabel loved nothing better than to talk at length about serious subjects. Books, plays and the excellence of certain actors were her never-failing theme. It was difficult always to get her to discuss herself and her own career. She preferred to turn the conversation into other channels, and she had no end of admirations.

Her sense of humor was never failing, and she saw inevitably the funny side of things and of people. With her wit was a gift, and her greatest art was perhaps that of light-hearted and enthusiastic comment.

One never knew that Mabel suffered aught during her entire association with Hollywood and its people. It was typical of her that she had no mind for personal concerns. Her thought was constantly of others, and she lived as few people do with feverish intensity.

I can remember glimpses of her in the every early days of pictures in California when she was justifiably regarded as one of the most beautiful of the stars. Her eyes were vibrantly dark, and filled always with animation. She longed for life then, and life literally devoured her. Few stars have ever been gifted with more natural talent, and her contribution to the screen will always be remembered.

Later she became more the student, with a mind that was ever avid for knowledge. Those who have known her of recent years realize how much she quested for intellectual and spiritual sustenance, never losing courage.

* from **Will Rogers'** syndicated column, February 24, 1930

Poor little wind-tossed Mabel Normand died. She has given the world much laughter, and strangers and friends much financial aid. I hope no one writes of her -- only the ones that had met and known her. Her last press notices would be beautiful.

* from *Pasadena Star News* February 25, 1930

One of the last acts in the life of Mabel Normand, the "beautiful clown" of comedy films, was the purchase of a little gay doll for a friend in Hollywood. This act, performed last Christmas while the former film star was seriously ill at Pottenger's Sanitarium, near Monrovia, where she died of tuberculosis early Sunday morning, was characteristic of the sparkling, unquenchable spirit which prompted it.

Hollywood today echoes with memories of such kindly deeds, as well as with memories of charities quietly performed by Miss Normand for fellow actors in need. With the vivacity and wit which were as essential a part of her as her beauty and talent, Miss Normand is remembered as among the kindest, and most unfortunate personages of the screen.

The doll, a rollicking little creature, went as a Christmas gift to Mrs. G. B. Griffin, a grandmother whose penchant for collecting unusual dolls is known to Hollywood. Although desperately ill of the disease from which she had been suffering for five years, Miss Normand still had times and heart to think of others. For several years she had sent Mrs. Griffin a doll. Last Christmas, from the sanitarium, the doll came as usual.

Though vindication arrived too late to repair the harm done to prestige and to a brilliant screen career, Mabel Normand officially was exonerated last December of any guilt in connection with the William Desmond Taylor murder case, in a statement by the former Los Angeles district attorney, Asa Keyes.

In a second statement, last month, Mr. Keyes reiterated his exoneration and also exonerated Mary Miles Minter of any guilty knowledge of the crime.

As one bit of the ill luck which seemed to pursue a spirit brave and lighthearted, fate arranged Miss Normand should be the last person, except his murdered, to see Taylor alive. For years, because of rumors, based on the fact that she often had been questioned by officials in connection with the case, suspicion of Miss Normand dwelt in the minds of the public.

Too ill to be excited by mention of the Taylor murder, Miss Normand died without knowing that she had officially been absolved of suspicion. Hollywood today mourns her not only as one of the most talented humorists in the films, but as a friend whose loyalty never failed.

* from *Los Angeles Daily News*, February 25, 1930

Mabel Normand Funeral Rites Set For Friday

While all of Hollywood mourned the passing of one of the cinema capital's gayest and, paradoxically, most tragic figures, the date of funeral services for Mabel Normand was set tentatively yesterday for 11 a. m. Friday.

Neither the church nor the place of interment has been selected, pending arrival of the mother, Mrs. Mary Normand, and a sister, Gladys Normand, from New York. They are expected to arrive by plane within a day or two.

Meanwhile the body of Miss Normand is being held at the Cunningham & O'Conner undertaking parlors, 1031 South Grand avenue. The public will not be permitted to view the body according to the secretary of Lew Cody, the dead star's husband.

Miss Normand died at the Pottenger sanitarium, Monrovia, early Sunday morning, after waging a losing battle for over a year against tuberculosis.

News of Miss Normand's death stunned Hollywood yesterday. Though it was well known that she was seriously ill, her friends had expected that her gameness, which had carried her over similar crises in the past, would help her to cheat death again.

The undertaking parlor was besieged with calls from friends who wished to view the body. Only a few were given permission, however. Miss Normand had wasted away until she weighed scarcely 50 pounds at the time of her death.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 25, 1930

Normand Funeral Friday

While messages of condolence were being received from all parts of the world, Lew Cody yesterday made preliminary plans for the funeral services for his wife, Mabel Normand, former screen comedienne. Miss Normand died early Sunday morning at a Monrovia sanatorium after a prolonged illness.

As tentatively planned yesterday the services will be held Friday. However, the time and place will not be selected and pallbearers will not be chosen until the arrival of Miss Normand's mother, Mrs. Claude B. Normand, who departed yesterday for Hollywood from Staten Island, N. Y.

It is understood that the funeral will be a semiprivate affair with only immediate members of the family and intimate friends present. It appeared almost certain that the public will not be invited to view the remains or permitted to attend the services.

Cody, with his friend, Norman Kerry, appeared yesterday at the funeral chapel and chose a beautiful bronze casket for his wife. According to Kerry, it will be determined upon the arrival of her mother whether Miss Normand will be interred in Southern California or at the place of her birth, Staten Island.

"Out of respect for Miss Normand's mother," Kerry said, "Mr. Cody does not want to make any definite arrangements for the service until she arrives. We received word she left yesterday morning and is expected to arrive Wednesday or Thursday."

Messages by the score were received yesterday at the Cody residence in Beverly Hills. All Hollywood, too, joined in mourning with Cody the loss of Miss Normand, who at one time, was one of the screen's most popular idols and highest salaried star.

Mary Pickford, with whom Mabel Normand worked for David Wark Griffith in the days of the old Biograph Studio yesterday said:

"The screen has lost its most spontaneous comedienne and I a loyal friend."

Charles Chaplin, for years a friend of Miss Normand, said:

"I am deeply grieved over the loss of a dear friend."

Other of her old studio associates, Blanche Sweet, Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Gloria Swanson, Bebe Daniels, Marie Prevost, Wallace Beery, Ben Turpin and Roscoe Arbuckle expressed similar sentiments over Mabel Normand's death, which culminated a long and brave fight against tuberculosis.

More details of Miss Normand's death at the Pottenger Sanatorium in Monrovia were told yesterday by Mrs. Julia Benson, for eight years her secretary, and one who was perhaps more intimately acquainted with the actress than anyone else. Mrs. Benson said yesterday she had a premonition that Miss Normand was reaching the end of her desperate battle.

"I usually left Miss Normand at 10 o'clock every night to retire in a room, adjoining," Mrs. Benson said.

"But Saturday night I felt lonely and instead of going directly to bed I called the Cody residence to get the housekeeper, as I wanted to talk to somebody. When I went back up to Miss Normand's room I realized at once she had taken a turn for the worse. I could tell by her breathing and by her eyes that she would soon go to sleep forever."

At 2:25 a.m. Sunday Miss Normand passed on quietly with Mrs. Benson and a nurse at her bedside.

According to Mrs. Benson, only once during recent months -- about three months ago -- did Miss Normand make any mention to her concerning the William Desmond Taylor murder case in 1922, when her name was brought into the limelight because she was the last person to see Taylor alive.

"She seldom if ever spoke of Mr. Taylor and on this occasion she merely expressed a wish the mystery of his death would be solved before she died. She always felt she had told all she knew about the case, and for that reason there was no more for her to say."

Yesterday scores of curious visited the funeral parlors or called to view the remains, but all were turned away at Cody's request.

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* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 25, 1930

Eventide

How often after a day of storm and wind, whirling cloud and bright flashes of sunshine, a sudden hush at eventide will still the troubled elements, and out of the western sky the last ray of departing light will shine like a benediction, clear with the promise of the coming peace of nightfall.

It is so with certain human lives, spent in alternate hour soft triumph and disaster, passing through a checkered day of sunshine and of showers, neither seeking, nor finding respite, nor asking odds of fate or fortune, but courageous and unashamed and ready to face the night when the sun sinks to rest at last.

It was so with Mabel Normand, for many years the queen of screen comedy, passing gaily and carelessly from triumph to triumph, enduring bravely unfounded suspicion and criticism, trials that sapped her strength and ruined her career; always the same, generous, lavish, selfless, throwing away the fruits of fortune on sycophants and ingrates; seeking no external aid when the dark shadows fell across her pathway -- and in the last fight that vanquished her subsisting month after month on sheer courage and the determination to be "a good soldier."

And at the close of the day there surely came to this good soldier the benediction of a peaceful sunset after a stormy day. For when at her request, her nurse leaned over her to repeat the words of a simple prayer of her childhood, her eyes still smiled the words her lips were past the strength of forming.

Many will say with the cant of the pack. "Poor Mabel Normand, she was her own worst enemy!" Let those who have never opened their hearts to unreasoned sympathy, who have never known what it means to be foolishly generous and gloriously oblivious of self, who have never been guilty of the impulsive act that scorns the caution of the crafty, who have never taken to themselves the lesson of the Good Samaritan, "lay this flattering unction to their souls."

As for poor Mabel Normand she has made that peace with God, the toils and the spoils of life denied her...a peace which the Pharisees who think they are their own best friends may some day seek in vain.

* from *Plattsburgh Sentinel*, Tuesday, February 25, 1930

The death yesterday of Mabel Normand under particularly sad circumstances will cause a pang of real sorrow to countless persons wherever motion pictures are known -- and that means about everywhere.

Mabel Normand was known as the "Tomboy of the Screen," and no one ever felt disappointment after watching for an hour or so the droll antics of this greatest of screen "cutups." She was at the height of her success only a few years ago -- yet it seems longer-- when there seemed to be an affinity between audiences and their shadowy favorites. Their pantomime was superb and they did not need the label "all talking" to pack the theatres with their friends. It really did seem as though there were ties of real friendship between those counterfeit personalities and those who watched their antics. Mabel Normand, Charlie Chaplin, the Gish Girls, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Marguerite Clark and others who will be recalled, always brought out their friends in droves.

We doubt if there was or ever will be a funnier comedy than Mabel Normand's feature picture, "Mickey," directed by Mack Sennett. If there was ever a screen comedy classic it was that same "Mickey."

It was Mabel who first put Plattsburgh on the screen map, when she came here during the training camp season of 1917 and produced "Joan of Plattsburgh," which was, we believe, the first war comedy to be put on the screen.

Finally tragedy seemed to dog the heels of Mabel Normand. An unfortunate chain of circumstances dragged her into one or two sensational cases, particularly the murder of director, Taylor. She had a great name and it is customary to drag names through the mire upon the slightest provocation, particularly in the case of people of the stage or screen. No one who has ever seen and laughed with Mabel Normand could ever be made to believe that she had any knowledge of the Taylor murder. Just the same, it helped to kill her. Let us hope that she will get a better "break" in the land of real shadows.

* from *Variety*, February 26, 1930

OBITUARY

Mabel Normand

Mabel Normand, 35, screen comedienne, died Feb. 23 of tuberculosis in Pottenger Sanitarium at Monrovia, Cal., a shadow of her old-time self and attended only by her secretary and traveling companion, Mrs. Julia Benson, and a nurse. Her husband, Lew Cody (Lois Coti) was away at the time, visiting at the home of Norman Kerry, picture actor.

Miss Normand had been reported seriously ill for some time, although she had shown improvement after blood transfusions. She had been the subject of considerable newspaper attention since the killing of William Desmond Taylor, film director, Feb. 2, 1922, and had also figured in another sensational affair when chauffeur, Horace A. Greer, was tried for shooting Courtland S. Dines, a wealthy Denver clubman, in 1923. She sued Mrs. Georgia W. Church for \$500,000 libel in November, 1924, as a result of the latter naming Miss Normand in a divorce action. All these matters unquestionably undermined her health, with Miss Normand up to the time of her death declaring she knew nothing of the Taylor murder and had expressed the one wish that the murderer be brought to justice before she died. The murder remains as much of a mystery as ever.

In December, 1928, Miss Normand's health became impaired to the extent that tuberculosis developed and she began a brave fight to regain her health. The vivacious queen of silent film clowning never got a chance to work in the talkers although she had signed a contract with Hal Roach to appear in comedies, but her health never permitted the comeback. Miss Normand was born in Quebec, Nov. 10, 1894, her parents moving to Staten Island, N. Y., when she was very young.

Her initial screen appearance was at the old Vitagraph studio in Brooklyn, but her development came at the old Biograph where she appeared in support of Mary Pickford in "The Mender of the Nets." Under D. W. Griffith's direction she was given her first real opportunity although her starring days started with Mack Sennett as her teacher. In the old Mack Sennett comedies, Miss Normand became a leading actress and worked under other directors, being starred in a number independent productions.

Her best remembered screen work was in "Mickey" She did many other successful films including "The Extra Girl," released by the Associated Exhibitors.

Her marriage to Cody occurred in November, 1926. When she was at the height of her career she invested in a handsome home for her parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. G. Normand, on Staten Island. Her father died about three weeks ago with news of his illness and demise having been withheld from the daughter because of her own condition.

Besides her mother, a sister, Gladys, and a brother, Claude, survive. The mother and sister left the coast upon news of her death, making part of the journey by airplane.

Miss Normand had once appeared on the legitimate stage, the A. H. Woods office presenting her in "The Little Mouse," in 1924. A few performances were given on the road, but the New York engagement was called off when the show was not considered strong enough for Broadway.

Services will be held Friday morning at the Church of Good Shepherd, Los Angeles, with the body to be brought east by her mother and sister for interment on Staten Island.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 27, 1930

The Heart of Mabel Normand

By Jennie Van Allen

"My grandmother is here from Ireland and is crazy to see you."

Oh, how Mabel Normand laughed.

"Why should anyone from Ireland want to see me, when God has been so good to the Irish? God blest them above all people. He put wit on the tip of their tongues. He put a shillalah in one hand and an olive branch in the other. Why does your grandmother want to see me?"

"She has always loved you on screen and has hobbled miles and miles to the little village whenever your picture was shown. Her cup would brim, if you would only let me take you both to dinner."

"I'll be delighted to meet your grandmother."

"You'll find her quaint. No that isn't the word -- she's queer. She'll drink her coffee from a saucer and it'll gurgle down her throat like water in a drain pipe."

"She'll grip a big bone in both fists and gnaw on it like an animal. She'll smoke a pipe that is black as pitch and smells like the infernal regions. She's an old, old woman -- dried-up and stoop shouldered. Her skin is like a wrinkled tobacco leaf and her hands are like claws with long nails that were full of Erin's soil when I met her in New York. I sent her money to come first class, but she came steerage with her gold tied up in a faded old handkerchief."

"Ever since she knew I was a friend of yours she has pestered me to invite you to dinner. I'll rig her up in a new black silk dress that fits her like the pod on last year's beans. I'll train her in table manners and --"

"Don't you dare make her self-conscious. Let her gnaw her bones and suck her fingers. Let her make noises when she drinks. Let her be herself. Don't reconstruct her. What shall I wear?"

"Something gorgeous -- the most splendid thing you own -- oh, if only you'd wear your \$10,000 gold gown! She has seen so little beauty in her life -- the blue of the skies, the green shoots in the bog, the waving grain before she cut it with her rusty old sickle."

So the boy who was a famous actor, took Mabel Normand and his queer, old grandmother to the most sumptuous private dining-room in the city. The old grandmother was speechless with awe at splendor she had never imagined.

Mabel Normand drank her steaming coffee out of a saucer. She gripped her T-bone with both hands and licked her plate. She smacked her lips and smoked the rankest pipe she could find in Los Angeles. Oh how the grandmother enjoyed her, for in all her glorious exuberant life she was never more beautiful nor more brilliant. Never did she sue for favor as the night she dined with the boy and his grandmother.

Now they are both gone -- the grandmother and the beautiful woman who was loved because she was loving. The great-hearted woman who spilled her goblet of precious wine on the hot sauce of the desert and who was betrayed by those she trusted.

· From Probate Records, County of Los Angeles

Last Will and Testament of Mabel Normand

I, MABEL NORMAND CODY, a resident of Beverly Hills, in the County of Los Angeles, State of California, being of sound mind, and fully understanding all my obligations toward members of my family and other persons, do make, publish and declare this, my last will and testament, in the manner following, to-wit:

I, give, devise, bequeath unto my mother, MARY DRURY NORMAND, all the property that I possess, of whatsoever kind and wherever situated, without restriction or condition of any kind whatsoever.

To my husband, Lew Cody, I give the sum of one dollar, only for the reason that he is well provided for in his own separate property and is capable of earning his own support.²²²

All of the property that I possess or own at the date of the making of this will is my own separate property and is the result of my own personal efforts.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my signature on this 12th day of February, 1927, at Beverly Hills, California, and declare this to be my last will in the presence [sic] of the witnesses whose names will appear below.

(signed) Mabel Normand Cody

Witnesses:

Julia Brew (Benson), residing at 526 Camden Drive, Beverly Hills, Cal²²³

Shemus Kennedy, residing at 526 Camden Drive, Beverly Hills, California

· Books listed in Probate Records as part of the estate accounting.

The Seven Lively Arts, by Gilvers Seldes. *Familiar Quotations*, John Bartlett. *When a Man's a Man*, Harold Bell Wright. *The Home Book of Verse*, Stevenson. *Nell Gwynn*, Lewis Melville. *The Coming of Gabriel*, Geo. Moore. *The Outline of History*, H.G. Wells. *Alien Souls. The Trail of the Beast. 111 Books*, Abdullah Achmed. *A Strange Story. Night and Morning. The Caxtons, vol. I and II*, Bulwer. *Memoirs of Fr. Mickey. Kai Lung's Golden Hour*, Ernest Bramah. *Rival Sultans*, H. Noel Williams. *The Deluge*, Hendryk Sienkiewicz. *Out of the Silent North*, Drago. *Suzanna. Poems, Essays and Letters*, Joyce Kilmer. *Lord Northcliffe, A Memoir*, Max Pemberton. *Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, (autobiography). *Intimate Letters of James Gibbons Huneker. The Puppet Show of Memory*, Maurice Baring. *An American Tragedy*, Dreiser. *Casanova's Homecoming*, Arthur Schnitzler. *The Storyteller's Holiday*, Geo. Moore. *Studies in Literature*, Sir Arthur Quillar-Couch. *On the Art of Reading*, Arthur Quillar-Couch. *Goethe's Faust. Mummer's Tale and Clio*, Anatole France. *Cytherea*, Joseph Hergesheimer. *Painted Veils*, James Huneker. *Memoirs of My Dead Life*, George Moore. *Heloise and Abelard*, George Moore. *Droll Stories*, Balzac. *Sister Beatrice*, Maeterlinck. *Adriane and Barbe Bleue*, Maeterlinck. *Writings of Oscar Wilde. The Kerith Brook*, George Moore. *Vanity Fair (first edition)*, Thackeray. *Poetica Erotica*, Verse, T. R. Smith. *The Decameron*, Boccaccio. *Sea Tracks of the Speejacks*, Dale Collins. *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall*, Thomas Hardy. *Hands Around*, Arthur Schnitzler. *Moods*, by Th. Dreiser. *Pierra Loti*, D'Auvergne. *A Lost Lady*, Willa Cather. *Confessions of a Child of the Century*, De Musset. *Venus in Furs*, Leopold Von Sacher-Masch. *The Cathedral*, Hugh Walpole. *Memoirs of a Midget*, by Walter de La Mare. *The Road of Ambition*, Elaine Sterne. *The World's Ambition*, by Wasserman. *Goethe's Wilhelm Meister. A Night in Luxembourg*, de Gourmont. *The Horses of Diomedes*, de Gourmont. *The Romance of Leonardo Da Vinci*, Merejkow. *The Man with the Clubfoot*, Valentine Williams. *The Return of Clubfoot*, Valentine Williams. *Memoirs of my Life*, Sarah Bernhardt. *The Christian*, Hall Caine. *Jurgen*, James Branch Cabell. *The Beloved Woman*, Kathleen Norris. *Harriett and the Piper*, Kathleen Norris. *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayam*, trans. Edw. Fitzgerald. *Brass*, Chas. Norris. *The Mystic Warrior. L'Album de la Guerre, 1914-1919. Barber's South Wales*.

OTHER BOOKS, listed separately:

The Story of Nell Gwynn, by Cunningham. *Terribly Intimate Portraits*, Noel Coward. *The Days I Knew*, Lillie Langtry. *The Blind Bow Boy*, Carl Van Vechten. *Familiar Quotations*, Bartlett. (Poems), Mrs. (E.B.) Browning. *War Verse*, Frank Foxcroft. *De Profundis*, Oscar Wilde. *Some Observations*, Dr. Frank Crane. *Gentleman Prefer Blondes*, Anita Loos. *The Life Story of an Ugly Duckling. Poetica Erotica*, T. R. Smith. *My Life in Art*, Constantine Stanislavsky. *Struggles and Triumphs*, (Life of P. T. Barnum). *Continental Stage Craft*, Kenneth MacGowan, Robt. E. Jones. *The Republic, The Statesman*, Plato. *The Sufistic Quotations of Omar Khyam. Improvement of the Understanding*, Spinoza. *Classical Conversations*, Bert L. Taylor. *Portrait of Mr. W.H.*, Oscar Wilde

SOFTBOUND BOOKS

Young Archimedes, Aldous Huxley. *Crome Yellow*, Aldous Huxley. *On the Margin*, A. Huxley. *Limbo*, A. Huxley. *Mortal Coils*, A. Huxley. *Antic Hay*, Aldous Huxley. *Two or Three Graces*, Aldous Huxley. *The House of Dreams Come True*, Pedlar. *The Lamp of Fate*, Pedlar. *The Barbarian Lover*, Pedlar. *Red Ashes*, Pedlar. *The Hermit of Far End*, Pedlar. *Waves of Destiny*, Pedlar. *The Splendid Folly*, Pedlar. *The Comedienne*, Reymont. *Belonging*, Wardsley. *Almond Blossoms*, Wardsley. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde. *The Flower Beneath the Foot*, Ronald Firbank. *Bella Donna*, Robert Hichens. *The Fruitful Vine*, Robert Hichens. *Smoke Bites and Other Stories*, Robert Hichens. *The Spirit of the Times*, Robert Hichens. *The Man Nobody Knows*, Bruce Barton. *Laughter*, Henry Bergson.

²²² Minta Durfee, from interview with Don Schneider: "And one of the nice things I want to tell you about him (Cody), when Mabel was getting so bad, in such BAD condition, and she had really made her will, but she was going to will something to Lew Cody, he said, 'Don't you dare to do that, because I've never supported you.' They'd only been married a couple of years when she died, and then he died. She died out at Monrovia, of tuberculosis, and I was living in New York and my sister was here, and she saw her the day before she passed on. And Lew Cody passed on out here."

²²³ The same as Mabel's home address.

Rudyard Kipling's *Verse, 1885-1918*. *The Heretic of Soana*, Gerhart Hauptmann. *The Wandering Jew*, Temple Thurston. *A Soul's Faring*, Muriel Strode. *Wedlock*, Jacob Tasserman. *Robin*, Burnett. *The Head of the House of Coombe*, Burnett. *Others for 1919*, Alfred Kreymborg. *Tragedies of Sex*, Frank Wederkind. *Love Days*. *Peculiar Poems*, J. Joyce. 4 Volumes of *O. Henry Memorial Award Prize Stories*. *The Great Modern English Stories*, O'Brien. *Best Short Stories*. *Adventures - Best Stories of 1920*.

- Portion of a Western Union Bill contained in Probate records.

Among the Probate records is a Western Union bill, dated Feb. 1930. It lists recipients who apparently received thank you telegrams from Cody for flowers and or condolences sent within a few days of Mabel's death. The list is interesting because it tells us that Mabel did not die alone and forgotten - as might seem to have been implied by some - but that, on the contrary, she was still very much in the hearts and minds of many of the Hollywood community at the time of her passing.

Hart....Newhall	Conway....Beverly Hills
Sickel....Pasadena	Collier Jr....Beverly Hills
Compton & C...Flintridge	Cline....Los Angeles
Rubin....Beverly Hills	Camp....Los Angeles
Rork....Beverly Hill	Capewe....Hollywood
Roland and Bard....Hollywood	Chaney....Beverly Hills
Robertson....Beverly Hills	Bushman....Hollywood
Price....Los Angeles	Brown....Beverly Hills
Prevost....Beverly Hills	Borzage....Hollywood
Parsons....Hollywood	Beery....Beverly Hills
Orsatti....Hollywood	Baggot....Hollywood
Neilan....Hollywood	Barthelmess....Beverly Hills
Oakman....Beverly Hills	Barrymore....Beverly Hills
Murray....Los Angeles	Anthony....Los Angeles
Moreno....Los Angeles	Alden....Hollywood
Moran....Beverly Hills	Walthall....Beverly Hills
Mulhall....Beverly Hills	Lyon....Hollywood
Mullins....Beverly Hills	Lloyd....Beverly Hills
Mitchell....Los Angeles	Lee....Los Angeles
McLaglen....Beverly Hills	Laurel....Beverly Hills
Maddux....Los Angeles	Lila Lee....Hollywood
Van Ettish....Los Angeles	Kirney....Beverly Hills
Von Eltz....Hollywood	Kirkwood....Hollywood
Turpin....Beverly Hills	Beery....Hollywood
Sweet....Beverly Hills	L. Joy....Los Angeles
Swanson....Los Angeles	Ince....Beverly Hills
Sullivan....Los Angeles	Howe....Hollywood
Stone....Hollywood	Horne....Glendale
Sherman....Los Angeles	Roach....Culver City
Schertzingler....Los Angeles	Hill....Beverly Hills
Selznick....Beverly Hills	Hersholt....Beverly Hills
Eyton....Los Angeles	Herzog....Hollywood
Eltinge....Hollywood	Henderson....Hollywood
Doe....Hollywood	Herman....Los Angeles
Dwan....Hollywood	Hale....Los Angeles
Dempsey....Hollywood	Hardy....Hollywood
Daniels....Hollywood	Gibbon....Hollywood
Davidson....Los Angeles	Griffith....Los Angeles
Dean....Hollywood	Gibson & Eiders....Beverly Hills
Dillon....Los Angeles	Francis....Hollywood
Colton....Los Angeles	Fazenda....Hollywood
Colman....Hollywood	Wilson....Beverly Hills
Collier Sr....Hollywood	Smith....Needles
Costello....Los Angeles	

* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 28, 1930

Normand Rites Set For Today

Hollywood, represented by leaders of the film industry, and stars, many of whom began their career with her, will pay its last respects to Mabel Normand, comedienne, when funeral services are conducted for her at 11 a.m. today from the Cunningham and O'Connor chapel, 1031 South Grand avenue. The services will be private.

Pallbearers announced yesterday by Lew Cody, her husband, include Sid Grauman, D. W. Griffith, Mack Sennett, Charles Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Ford Sterling, Eugene Pallette, Samuel Goldwyn, United States District Judge James Arthur Goebel and Paul Bern, her lifelong friend and adviser.

The service today will be conducted by Rev. Father Michael J. Mullins, pastor of the Good Shepherd Church of Beverly Hills. Interment will be at the new mausoleum at Calvary Cemetery. Cody has requested the public to respect his wishes for privacy during the services.

Yesterday it was learned that besides immediate members of the family about 100 close friends of Miss Normand and Cody will attend. Mrs. Mary Normand, mother, and Gladys, sister of Miss Normand, were scheduled to arrive yesterday, but missed airplane connections. They are to arrive at 9:30 a.m. today by train in time for the services. They are coming from Staten Island, N.Y.

Miss Normand's died last Sunday at a Monrovia sanatorium, following a lingering illness.

* from *Los Angeles Record*, February 28, 1930

Mabel Normand Funeral

They buried Mabel Normand today.

While crowds fought with police reserves from two stations, and patrolmen had to establish traffic lines for two blocks around, the film world, from its highest to its most obscure, paid its last tribute to the girl, who, in another day, had made millions laugh.

It was a funeral such as Los Angeles never saw before -- not even on the day they buried the beloved Valentino or the popular Barbara LaMarr or the tragic Wally Reid.

There was no way of estimating the number who attended. There was no counting the film stars who in tears, paid their last farewell to a girl who never before brought tears to anyone except herself.

The funeral service held in the chapel of Cunningham & O'Conner, 1931 South Grand avenue, was conducted by Rev. Father Michael Mullins, pastor of the Church of the Good Shepherd and chaplain to the Catholic Motion Picture Actors Guild.

It was a simple service -- a service of prayer and a parting of the girl who had gone.

The funeral was conducted in a chapel banked high with flowers -- the flowers of the men and women whose names are known to every theatergoer in the land.

Those who heard the service included the men and women who worked with Miss Normand in the days of her stardom with the old Keystone company.

Charles Chaplin, Ford Sterling, Roscoe Arbuckle, Marie Dressler, Mack Sennett, Charles Avery -- they were all there.

Among others who wept as Father Mullins recited the last litany of his church were Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, Maurice Costello who knew Miss Normand in the early days of the films; Constance Talmadge and Betty Compson and countless others who were her "playmates" on the old Keystone lot at Edendale.

Mabel's mother, Mrs. Mary Normand, and her sister, Gladys, who came by plane and train from the family home at Staten Island, N.Y., and her husband, Lew Cody, were the chief mourners.

The pallbearers were:

Sid Grauman, D. W. Griffith, Sennett, Chaplin, Fairbanks, Sterling, Eugene Pallette, Samuel Goldwyn, Paul Bern, United States District Attorney Judge James and Col. Art. Gobel.

Interment was at Calvary Cemetery.

* from *Baltimore Evening Sun*, March 1, 1930

It was the Hollywood of old that buried Mabel Normand yesterday.

The body of the tragedy haunted film comedienne reposed today at the receiving vault of the quiet chapel in Calvary cemetery, awaiting the decision of her family as to its final resting place. Miss Normand died last Sunday after a long fight with tuberculosis.

There was no great funeral for the one time spirit of screen comedy, in accord with the wishes of her family, and no surging mobs were there to mar the dignity of the obsequies. A crowd there was, of course, of several hundreds which waited outside the local funeral parlors where the brief service of the Catholic church was read by the Rev. Michael J. Mullins, of the Church of the Good Shepherd, awaiting the funeral procession when it arrived at the cemetery.

The new Hollywood of microphones and music and dancing chorus girls was scarcely represented at Mabel's Normand's funeral, except by those of the old days who survived in the new.

Still, if Mabel Normand's spirit looked on yesterday, it must have smiled.

For it was her own Hollywood, that Hollywood that loved her and remained loyal when the breath of scandal had wilted her career and burned away her health, the movie world of her own heyday, that followed her to the tomb. The grief of those who wept at the sight of her flower shrouded casket was the real grief of friends some who helped her rise to fame, some who rose with her and whose star descended before her own; other the majority, who were of the old film era and had survived into the new.

Officially, Hollywood tendered its tribute of sorrow through the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which sent a gold and white wreath. Honorary pallbearers were D. W. Griffith and Mack Sennett, her early directors; Douglas Fairbanks and Charles Chaplin; Ford Sterling, her old co-worker in comedy; Paul Bern and Samuel Goldwyn, the producer; Sid Grauman, Art Gobel, the aviator, and Federal Judge William James, all her friends.

Miss Normand's mother, Mrs. Mary Normand and elderly Gladys who arrived from Staten Island, New York, shortly before the service, stood beside the casket with Lew Cody, Miss Normand's husband, and Mrs. Julia Benson, long-time companion of the actress, were weeping.

Also present were Marie Dressler, who starred in "Tillie's Punctured Romance," the picture which helped to establish Mabel Normand and Charlie Chaplin in the movies, Louise Fazenda, Ruth Roland, Harold Lloyd and Mildred Davis, his wife; Creighton Hale, a star in Miss Normand's day, Adela Rogers St. Johns, novelist and movie historian, Maurice Costello, early film idol, Roscoe Arbuckle, once the screens funniest fat man; Marshall Neilan and King Vidor, the directors; Mary Pickford, Ben Turpin, Jean Hersholt, Marion Davies; and Mae Marsh, the "little sister" of "The Birth of a Nation," and Constance Talmadge, both now retired, and others of present or former notoriety.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 1, 1930

Mabel Normand At Rest

Fate was unkind to her during her lifetime, there were unfortunate circumstances that brought unhappiness to her and her friends, but all these things were forgotten yesterday when Mabel Normand was taken to her last resting place. The traits of Mabel Normand, hidden for years in the maze of circumstances, were brought to remembrance -- the charitable, the kindly and the happy-go-lucky traits of which so few knew -- save her intimate friends.

The funeral services were unlike the ever-smiling comedienne. They were reserved and dignified, simple, yet impressive and kept as much away from the public as was possible under the circumstances because she had dropped from the public limelight and left all that behind some eight years ago.

Under one roof there gathered yesterday more than 100 of the most prominent figures in the film industry, numbered among the many with whom she started on her career and to the last remained her staunch friends.

While crowds milled about in front, this assemblage gathered at the Cunningham and O'Connor funeral chapel, 1031 South Grand avenue. Promptly at 11 a.m., Rev. Father Michael J. Mullins of the Good Shepherd Church of Beverly Hills began reading the Roman Catholic ritual of the dead. Only briefly did he speak of Miss Normand. Then he said a prayer for her, as many knelt and prayed with him.

"And may your soul rest in peace." The services were over.

Her friends sat through the brief service with tear-dimmed eyes. The huge bronze casket on the rostrum before them was covered by a blanket of flowers made of maidenhair fern, lilies of the valley, and in the center, a spray of gardenias.

There were flowers in profusion, sprays, wreaths and designs and crosses heaped about the casket, placed on the floor or hung about the walls. These came from her friends, too.

As Father Mullins stepped away from the casket, it was turned about by attendants and pushed out behind the honorary pallbearers. Not once was it opened.

Following it came Lew Cody with Mrs. Mary Normand, the comedienne's mother, who with her daughter Gladys, arrived here only three hours before from their home in Staten Island, N.Y. Miss Normand's sister followed on the arm of Paul Bern, film executive, and a lifelong friend of Miss Normand. Mrs. Julia Benson, her secretary and confidant, was escorted by Cliff Durant. Mrs. Normand, her daughter and Mrs. Benson were dressed in black and wore heavy veils.

The pallbearers were Sid Grauman, D. W. Griffith, Mack Sennett, Charles Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Ford Sterling, Eugene Pallette, Samuel Goldwyn, United States Judge James Arthur Goebel, Paul Bern and Roscoe Arbuckle.

And those who were there to pay last respects included such famous personages as Mary Pickford, Norman Kerry, Marshall Neilan, Marie Dressler, Marion Davies, Maurice Costello, Constance Talmadge, Louis B. Mayer, Irving Thalberg, Mrs. Jack Ford, King Vidor, Gene [Jean] Hersholt, Ben Turpin, Frank Campeau, Laurence Stallings, Eddie Cline, Louise Fazenda, Polly Moran, Leatrice Joy and Lois Wilson.²²⁴

It was with many of these that Miss Normand rose to fame on the silent screen. They remember her as one of Hollywood's most charitable actresses, ever eager to help the down-and-outer of her profession, with never a word against anyone else but Mabel Normand.

From the funeral parlors, the cortege proceeded to Calvary Cemetery in Whittier Boulevard, where Father Mullins said the last rites over Miss Normand, in the tiny but beautiful chapel.

It was here that the mourners showed most emotion. As Cody arose, Mrs. Normand and her daughter [Gladys Normand] and Mrs. Benson lingered a moment beside the casket. The women bent over it and kissed it. They would have collapsed had it not been for their escorts.

At the cemetery, as at the chapel downtown, there were huge crowds. At the cemetery chapel the crowd tried to swarm into the already packed room only to be kept back by a squad of Los Angeles policemen. The crowd lingered long, peering through the windows to catch a glimpse of the casket.

The body is to lie in a temporary receiving vault in the Calvary chapel basement until definite plans are made for the final resting place. There is a remote possibility it may be taken to Staten Island for interment beside Miss Normand's father, who died three weeks ago, but in all probability it will be removed to a permanent crypt in the new mausoleum at Calvary Cemetery.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, March 1, 1930

" Grace Kingsley

Who that knew Mabel Normand ever will forget her? No one. That's what we thought as we attended her funeral yesterday. She had two qualities which impress themselves on people -- the ability to make you laugh and the deep kindness that interested itself in the least person around her.

In other words, she gave herself, not merely her money or her favors or her gifts, to people.

A striking feature of the funeral yesterday was the presence of the world's greatest comedians -- and all with tears in their eyes as the remembered their pal. The men who have made the world laugh wept with the world yesterday.

* from *New Movie Magazine*, April 1930

A party with a most tragic finale was the little surprise birthday gathering arranged for Lew Cody by some of his friends. It was one of the first social events Lew has attended since his recovery from his long illness and came as a surprise to him, for, when he arrived home after a trip to the sanitarium at Monrovia, to see his wife, Mabel Normand, he found a group of friends waiting to wish him many happy returns of the day. Just after midnight, the guests were shocked and the gay effort to cheer Lew up a little was turned to tears by a telephone call that Mabel had passed away quietly at a little after twelve. Those who had arranged the party were Norman Kerry, Cliff Edwards, Jack Gilbert, Marshall Neilan, Walter O'Keefe, Jack Pickford and Hoot Gibson, all old time friends of Lew's.

²²⁴ Noticeably missing from this list of mourners is F. Richard Jones who had himself contracted tuberculosis in August 1929, his illness therefore preventing him from attending. He died "unexpectedly" of the illness on December 14, 1930. Jones left a wife, Irene, and one child, a daughter.

* from *New Movie Magazine*, April 1930

" Walter Winchell

Poor Mabel Normand, she suffered so before the end came, but we didn't know her well and we will follow the counsel of Will Rogers, who urged people not to write about her career or passing unless they knew her. "Only those who knew her could write about her," Rogers advised. It was a touching story, however, that Eddie Doherty wrote in one of the New York dailies about her. Doherty told how the newspaper crowd helped make her sick and unhappy, for it was their duty to investigate matters in which her name was involved, although no one could ever connect her with some of the west coast tragedies.

Doherty was sincerely sorry, he said, that his duty caused her pain and he wrote a beautiful story about her.

I met her once up at T. R. Smith's place on 47th Street. Mr. Smith is the executive head for the Liveright publishing firm and at a literary party, as they are laughingly called, Mabel passed around her autograph album, asking all the celebrated writers there to write in her book. They all penned amusing lines and tributes to her and then she confessed to me that she once was the world's champion autograph-pest hater. She disliked to give her autograph, she said, and now look, here she was collecting the signatures of well-knowns herself. "At heart I guess" she said, "I'm a hero-worshiper, too."

* from *New Movie Magazine*, April 1930

" Herbert Howe

...A representative of a paper rang the bell of Mabel's apartment during the time when scandal was poisoning her life. Her name had been dragged into it only through loyal friendship. Mabel turned white but she received the representative.

"I wanted to know if you wanted to renew your subscription," said the boy.

Mabel had expected a reporter. When the boy left she fainted in the arms of Mamie [Owens], her maid.

...At the funeral of Mabel Normand the motion-picture industry seemed suddenly to have aged. Allowance must be made, of course, for grief that lined their faces, bowed their heads. Yet most of the pioneers of gay Hollywood who followed her casket with tear-wet eyes--greatest figures of this fanciful world--were quite gray-haired, some bent and wrinkled. Ten years ago they were debonair, romantic: Chaplin, Griffith, Ford Sterling, Mack Sennett, Doug Fairbanks, Sam Goldwyn and many others.

It wasn't a funeral, it was a farewell. No one was ever so loved as "Mickey." She hasn't died, she lives forever in the hearts of us to whom she gave love, courage, sympathy, tolerance.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 1930

" Grace Kingsley

Into the midst of our happiness came the news of the death of Mabel Normand, beloved of everybody present. Georgie Grandee stopped singing his comic songs; we all paused to tell about some sweet thing that Mabel had done for us -- one girl confessed she had loaned her money when she was in a tight pinch; another that Mabel had advanced her money for singing lessons when the talkers [talkies] came along; there was nobody who hadn't something wonderful to remember.

As for Roscoe Arbuckle, he merely said, "My pal's dead!" and went out to the patio. And though the rest of us resumed our cheerfulness to a certain extent at least, Roscoe remained withdrawn, refused to talk much with anybody, though he's usually kidding about and fasted at dinner time.

Betty and Jimmie Cruze perhaps felt as much as Roscoe as they had known Mabel well, and many were the little stories they had to tell of Mabel's humanity, of her bubbling and never failing sense of humor.

* from *Los Angeles Times*, April 20, 1930

" Grace Kingsley

[Extract of article "The Evolution of the Wild Party"]

...Mabel Normand, whose death we are now all mourning, was queen in those days. If she was in a café, the party was a success. I remember seeing her one night at [Al "Pop"] Levy's when Charlie Chaplin was there. She delighted in embarrassing the modest, little English comedian. She sat across the room from him and every time she could catch his eye, she would wave gladly and sing out, "I'll be your leading lady yet!"...

* from *Motion Picture Classic*, May 1930

The Great Heart

Hollywood Pays Tribute to Tragic, Stoic Mabel Normand

By Charleson Gray

Maybe she'd like to know...

Maybe that gay and childlike spirit, which slipped from its tormented envelope that Sunday afternoon of February 23 at Pottenger's Sanitarium, on the outskirts of the city she loved so well, would like to know how Hollywood was affected by her passing. She might appreciate knowing that there wasn't a member of the picture industry who, learning of her death, didn't instinctively feel a shock of loss.

For the greater part, the movie names come and go-up one day and out the next. But there are some stars in the cinematic heavens seemingly impervious to the grinding wheel of years. Chaplin. Pickford. Hart. Swanson. Mabel Normand...On the screen or off, their names are as familiar to us as are our own.

Mabel Normand-that is a name you haven't seen on the screen for-how long is it? Six years, seven? Since the failure of "Raggedy Rose," and the complete going into action of those batteries of misfortune and bad health which deprived us of the shadow-self of the greatest comedienne of her day

The Stoic

Few people realized what a sick girl Mabel was, even during the last of those months when she played so delightfully through miles of romping celluloid. Polly Moran tells of entering her dressing-room after a hard day of work, after hours which had seen Mabel tossed about, taking falls, going through all the comic's routine. Polly saw a

tube in her back, draining an infected lung. Mabel had told no one. She had asked for no special favor. She simply had gone on, taking what had come, without frown or complaint, sturdily.

"I can take it on the chin," was her cry to the last. She could endure anything. That was her credo, the smiling challenge to the powers of darkness that she could withstand the slings and arrows of whatever outrageous fortune it might be their whim to direct toward her.

And those slings and arrows were many. "I think she was the most misunderstood person that ever lived," her former publicity representative, Ralph Wheelright, told me. "The world thought of her as hard, bold, a little roughneck. That was wrong, every bit of it. She was just a tomboy; and under that gay manner, she was one of the sweetest and gentlest women that ever lived. Even when the breaks were going against her a little worse than usual, she never changed. She never complained and she never bore any hatred except for one man-the murderer of William Desmond Taylor

The Jest of Fate

Even in that one small hate, out of all the many she might have entertained, Mabel was characteristic. She did not hate that unknown slayer for what he had done to her; but for what he had done to Bill, her friend, even as she lay dying and its headlines flared up again with the dumb "confession" of a dumb politician.

The Taylor case, that tragic affair which so definitely contributed to her retirement from the screen, was but one instance of Mabel's wretched luck, the crowning jest of her ironic flair for being present during tragic or scandalous episodes.

It was rumored that she was present at the fatal Arbuckle-Virginia Rappe party in the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco; that she was present at the shooting of Cortland Dines in the apartment of Edna Purviance; and that she was the last known person to have seen Taylor alive. Like Lloyd Hamilton, another genial comic dogged by tragedy, she was an eternal bystander in the comedy of life. The sort of person who gets in the face the pie intended for the one who ducked, the kind whose clothing continually is being muddled by the wheels of an indifferent fate.

Her Reading and Writing

An omnivorous reader, Mabel had stopped at the director's house to borrow a book shortly before the slaying-and thus had her name identified with a murder that furnished gossip for half the world. To the casual that explanation about borrowing books sounded rather thin; but Mabel's love of reading was as little known by the world outside as her every trifling indiscretion was distressingly familiar. There apparently was no pen with which she was unfamiliar, from Nietzsche's to that of Kathleen Norris.

Too, somewhere in that immense collection of books, are several manuscript volumes of poetry. Mabel's gift for verse was authentic and clear, the true heritage of the song-loving Irish soul. It happens that my brother-in-law for years was her legal adviser and one of her best friends. I have known her to employ waits in his office in writing poems, impromptu bits of verse scratched off on stenographers' pads and immediately thrown in the nearest wastebasket.

But it is not through any such dead medium as pen and ink that Mabel's name will be an ever fresh memory to us all. She will survive through the just cause of her fame-those miles of happy films, and those innumerable acts of kindness which forever have graven her name on Hollywood's heart.

How right was Will Rogers, saying: "She gave the world much laughter, and friends and strangers much financial aid. Her last press notices should be beautiful!" They appeared in newspapers and magazines all over the world.

As to her acting ability, there can be no question. No less an authority than Mack Sennett is quoted as holding that she was the most gifted player that ever stepped before a camera, and sweeping judgment though that may seem, there are few voices of dissent among competent critics. It is, however, as Mabel the human being that she will be remembered along Celluloid Boulevard. There are hundreds of tales, thousands, of her open-handed generosity, her warm kindness and help for anyone less fortunately situated than the average. It was the underdog, always the underdog, who enlisted her sympathy.

Her chauffeur and automobiles were constantly at the call of little old Irish ladies who were more accustomed to a bent position over wash-tubs than seats upon luxurious upholstery. She was ever busy encouraging friends to contribute to her multitudinous charities. Always, however, in a manner in keeping with their means and their sins.

Her Sense of Justice

Herbert Howe, the fan writer, tells of attending a service with Mabel, and later, out of her hearing, being petitioned by the priest for a charitable contribution. Later, Mabel asked Howe if he had been approached, and how much he had given. He had given a hundred dollars.

In the middle of the sidewalk she stopped, hands on hips and eyes flashing angrily, and proceeded to give the stunned writer the dressing-down of his life. "You poor easy mark!" she concluded her diatribe."----- gave only fifty dollars-and he's twice as bad as you are!"

To compile an anthology of the countless anecdotes illustrative of Mabel's impulsive great-heartedness would be to assemble a book a foot thick. But there is one, among thousands of "loans"-those to the many luckless extra girls whose passages she paid back home, those to the countless young strugglers to whom she offered a helping hand on the slippery ladder to fame-which I think just a trifle more characteristic than the rest.

A Spending Holiday

When, after years of small salaries, she at last got into the big money, Mabel went to Paris for the purpose of spending some of it. She did. Among her purchases, for instance, was a ten-thousand-dollar gold gown. Jewelry, frocks, shoes -- she lavished upon every hunger for fine trappings which she ever had had the inexhaustible flow of her purse. She went everywhere and did everything. She had, in fine, a swell time.

Returning to New York, she was met by a party of friends, Staten Island girls who had known her when she was the rickety little daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Claude Normand. They told her how much they envied her the spectacular trip that she had just made -- and in answer Mabel herded them all together and took them back to Paris for a holiday on the next boat!

"She was the best-hearted girl that ever came into pictures," said Roscoe Arbuckle. "She was always doing good and she never harmed a living soul."

Tragically Magnetic

Such a heedless headlong personality as was hers is certain to be the target for every manner of rumor and gossip. "If you ever commit suicide," she told one of her friends, presenting him with a birthday present, "for heaven's sake don't wear this watch! They'll see this 'From Mabel' engraved on it, and say I was responsible!"

"She was the most misunderstood person that ever lived," this man said of her.

Of all the figures of picturedom who have been cruelly maligned by idly chattering tongues, there has been none to suffer more than Mabel. Most of these slanders are as unprintable as they are bitterly silly. Suffice it to say that even her cute, eccentric way of speaking, coupled with her supercharged gaiety, opened her to charges of drug addiction!

As the increasing years saw the fabric of lies being braided into a whip that scourged her daily, more and more was she forced to the defiant cry of "I can take it!" Few knew how deeply she was hurt by this whispering campaign which did so much to take from her the work that she loved beyond all things.

Laughing Again

One studio man, just before the Christmas of 1928, was given a glimpse. Mabel's husband, Lew Cody, was on a vaudeville tour. Always the best of pals, always clowning and working out gags with which to amuse one another, she thought that it would give Lew a laugh if she sent him a movie of herself for a Christmas present.

That movie, that little characteristic child-like present for Lew, was taken at M-G-M. Mabel hadn't been on a set for five years. Things had changed -- lights, make-up, all the new developments were bewildering to the girl who had been buoying herself up through the long disappointed years with the thought that she was still Mabel Normand, the great star.

But soon, with the poise of the true trouper, she accustomed herself to the new lights and the panchromatic paint, and was rollicking about the set with the same verve and laugh-provoking antics which had swung her to the heights back in the old days.

"Like Old Home Week"

Some of the older men on the set -- "grips" and electricians -- had worked with her before. "Gee," one of them told me, "it was like old home week. If only that kid had had the chance to make that one more picture that she wanted to do!"

She captured the younger men on the set too; the newcomers to the game, just as she had recaptured the veterans. And when they saw what it meant to her to be back in there doing her stuff, busy as they were, they let her go through the full routine of her clown's pantomime time and time again.

I don't know how many times those patient, hard-boiled fellows retook those scenes for Mabel. I do know that they were glad to do so, and are gladder now that they did. For shortly afterward her growing weakness forced her to the bed which she never left.

So that day, marked by the generosity of the studio gang, saw the last appearance before a camera of the small bundle of pleasure and pain, of ecstasy and sorrow, of indiscretions and talent and amazing valor which the world called Mabel Normand -- the little regular who could take it...and did.

[Poem, from same article, page 26]

Short, Short Story

I'm bad, bad, bad!

But I'll really keep my engagement.

If there was one sprig of poison-ivy

In a field of four-leaf-clovers,

I'd pick it up.

If it was raining carbolic acid,

I'd be the dumb-bell sponge.

Mabel Normand

[page 27]

Patience

The world is made of waiting—

A lesson we all must learn.

Don't be condemning or hating—

Be patient and wait your turn.

Be patient when there's sorrow—

The sun will shine again.

Always there is to-morrow—

Learn to live through pain!

Mabel Normand

[Poem, page 28]

There's a circle of gold in the sky,

And the sun's far out in the West

It's that wonderful hour before dusk,

That hour we both loved best.

I'm waiting here beneath the window

For your loved steps on the walk;

I'm closing my eyes and I'm thinking,

Thinking I hear you talk.

My heart again is aflame

*You're holding me close to your breast;
While you whisper again that you love me
And your lips to mine are pressed.*

*The circle of gold is now gray
And the sun no longer I see;
'Tis only a memory that haunts me,
But it brought you so close to me.*
Mabel Normand

* from *Photoplay*, May 1930

MABEL NORMAND SAYS GOOD-BYE

By James R. Quirk

Mabel Normand

By Margaret E. Sangster

*Beneath the gallant sparkle of her laughter,
There always lay the hint of wistfulness,
As if she knew that storm must follow after
the brightest day ... Perhaps her soul could guess
That tragedy was waiting, eager handed,
To block her path, to stay her dancing feet,
To leave her lonely, pitiful, and stranded...
Yet who shall say her life was incomplete?*

*For, oh, she brought swift smiles to sorry faces
She taught a weary-hearted world to sing;
Her presence lent new grace to lonely places,
She had the radiance of waking spring.
Behind her mask of comedy, she waited
For every hurt the future held in store;
She gave herself to all, nor hesitated ...
And died when she, at last, could give no more!*

Mabel's Message

"Mabel Normand's two great comforts, as she lay dying, were the devotion of Lew Cody and the letters from her fans. They enabled her to meet death bravely. She asked me to tell the public, through Photoplay Magazine, of her love and appreciation. 'They have been dear to me, and sweet and kind,' she said."

Battered and beaten by life, little Mabel Normand has gone home to the Great Heart who understands all.

I am sure that voices have whispered love and encouragement and devotion to her on her long, frightened journey across the Dark River -- voices of crooning old Irish women whose last days were made comfortable by Mabel's generosity -- voices of pitiful little extra girls who had turned to her for help and sympathy -- voices of hunger that was fed -- of tears that were dried.

There would be one voice whispering in a proud, strange tongue; and this would be the voice of old Minnie, the Sioux Indian who was sheltered by Mabel's bounty and who loved her with a wild devotion.

Mabel Normand was the most extraordinary character I have ever known. Certainly, the most interesting and unusual personality the screen has ever known.

There will never be another Mabel Normand. Few such vivid individualities have appeared in the world in any *métier*. Beyond that, the screen world has become too standardized to offer scope and right-of-way for another such character.

Generous, impulsive, self-effacing, impudent, untamed, misunderstood and not resentful of the cruelty of that misunderstanding. Daring in spirit, tender, brilliant, and with the eager curiosity of a child.

It was not without significance that Mabel's lips were always slightly apart -- like a child drinking in a fairy story. That was the keynote of her life. Her avid eagerness for all that life held. It was as though she realized in some dim way that she had not long to live and wanted to take a bite out of each cookie.

She was the best listener I have ever known. She listened to tramps and great authors; to soldiers who talked to her of the intricacies of military strategy and to jail birds who told her of fights with policemen.

Mabel will always be pictured in my mind as the little Irish tad with a sable coat, as the little girl who ate peanuts all over the back seat of a gorgeous imported limousine.

I suppose that no woman ever lived who has been showered with more fame and more attention; and no woman who has known so cruelly the voice of unmerited scandal. She took the brickbats without bitterness and the bouquets with a giggle. Mabel was without vanity. She has a quality rare in creative artists of being a spectator looking at life.

When I first knew Mabel she was a star comedienne of the old Mack Sennett Comedy Company. That was the time when the Keystone Kops were in their heyday.

Mack Sennett was one of the greatest figures of the screen world and Mabel was recognized as being without a peer.

In those golden Keystone days, with Mack Sennett driving and inspiring her, Mabel's great talent for comedy was in full flower. Her fellow artists were quick to recognize it.

Once Photoplay asked Mary Pickford who her favorite actress was.

Mary, at that time the fans' greatest, answered quickly, "Mabel Normand!"

She was just the same then as when misfortunes overtook her later on. There was not one pretentious thing about her. The electricians on the set all adored the ground she walked on; and the cameramen would die in their tracks for her.

She was famous at that time for the fact that she scattered money around like a sailor on a spree; but I only found out little by little and always by accident, the places where her dollars rolled away. The operation she had paid for; the impoverished families she was supporting; the orphans and the widows she was helping.

I remember one incident -- a gesture that no one but a natural aristocrat could have achieved.

A very old Irish woman -- a relative of one of the studio help -- had one ambition. She wanted to meet Mabel Normand. By request, Mabel went to have dinner with her--dressed in her most elegant party clothes.

Once in the presence of her divinity, the poor old woman was simply paralyzed. She was straight from the bogs of Ireland. Her table manners were something to send goose flesh down one's spine.

But so sweet were the manners of Mabel Normand that she promptly hung a napkin under her own chin as the old lady did. When the chops came on, she picked up the meat and gnawed it off the bone.

And when the old lady timidly took out her pipe, Mabel found a pipe, too, and they whiffed together. That will remain, to my mind, one of the most delicate acts of chivalry it has ever been my lot to know.

Mabel had a peculiar relationship to Mack Sennett. She loved him; fought with him; feared him and respected him with something like awe. Mack Sennett was, in fact, her Svengali. She resented the awe she had for him; but she never could rise to artistic heights without him.

Away from Sennett, she ceased to be the great artist of the screen and became commonplace. Mostly I think it was a matter of understanding. Sennett, as Irish himself as the banshees, along knew how to get the best from Mabel's wayward, rebellious Irish heart.

Her relationship to Charlie Chaplin also was one of the odd chapters of the screen. When he first came to the studio, Mabel liked to torture him with taunts in the mischievous way a child might have made fun of a queer-looking stranger. But she was one of the first to recognize his genius. Much of Chaplin's success in those earliest days was due to Mabel's untiring tutoring. Chaplin was a great artist from the day he was born, but he did not know screen technique.

No one grieved more sincerely over her death than he. "She was one of the truest friends I have ever known and one of the most remarkable, brilliant and self-sacrificing women any one has ever known. She was a great woman and a great character."

Mabel's illness was of long standing. When I first knew her fifteen years ago, she was suffering from tuberculosis; but so brave was her spirit that she tossed off the threat with a gay indifference.

In later years, this malady was aggravated by grave troubles and worries. Mabel was the Patsy who got the blame for what other people did. She suffered humiliation and disgrace in silence when she could have set herself right -- by "telling on" some one else.

There was the case of the chauffeur who adored Mabel so devotedly, that he shot a man whom Mabel knew but slightly, but whom the half-crazed boy thought was bringing bad company to her harem-scarem, topsy-turvey house.

There was the William Desmond Taylor case of which Mabel honestly knew nothing; but which brought down odium and club lady resolutions upon her.

As usual in such cases, Mabel's bitterest critics were often those who owed her most of money and kindness and tolerant charity.

She realized that she had to die and met the issue bravely and without whimpering. One of her last messages was to me; when she asked me to tell the public through Photoplay Magazine of her love and appreciation. "They have been dear to me, and sweet and kind," she said.

The affection between Lew Cody and Mabel Normand that resulted in their early morning marriage has never been understood. But to one who knew them both intimately, it was a sweet story.

They had been devoted friends for years. Theirs was a comradeship of laughter -- laughing at life, laughing at and with each other, laughing off troubles.

Lew loved Mabel, and Mabel adored Lew. No woman could have helped loving a man who brought such happiness and sunshine into a life over which death was even then trying to cast a shadow.

Even at the last, she did not lose her thirst for life.

So weak she could scarcely talk, she took up the telephone to ask eager questions of a war correspondent friend of mine who had just come back from a Mexican revolution. What the air raids were like; tell her about the Mexican girl who fought in the trenches; and what became of the dog who ran up and down on the top of a fire-swept trench:

He told her about a tramp aviator who had a steel extension in his leg which he used to loosen and tighten up with a screw driver for the purpose. Mabel laughed. "You are a liar," her voice came gasping over the phone. Impudent to the last.

Mabel has gone from us, but like Chevalier Bayard -- without fear and without reproach, she goes boldly forward.

APPENDIX A

The series "How to Get Into the Movies," appeared in Movie Weekly beginning in late February 1922. Although attributed to Mabel, it is difficult to know for certain exactly who wrote it, and what portion, if any, came directly from her own pen. Some scholars, understandably, believe it to have been ghost written. The most likely explanation, however, is that it was composed by someone other than Mabel, but who based their work on a series of talks or chats they had with her. In addition to Mabel's observations, they presumably interjected comments of their own, or that of someone from the Sennett studio. The basis and background of this kind of piece is hinted at in something Mabel wrote in 1916:

"Ever since my work for the motion picture screen has received a sufficient amount of favorable attention at the hands of critics and fans to place me in the limelight of publicity as a star my mail has been literally choked with letters from girls from all parts of the world. The writers, for the most part, range in ages from 16 to 20 years and nearly all of them ask for advice as to a motion-picture career. At first I used to reply to these appeals each night after a days work. It was not long, however, until the letters became so numerous that it was practically impossible for me to answer each one personally.

"Nearly all of these letters are from girls who are so obviously sincere and serious in their endeavors to decide whether they shall 'go into the movies,' which is the modernized version of 'going on the stage,' that I want to have them properly answered. My secretary now replies to most of the letters, for she knows just what my opinions are and just how I would personally answer almost any question, but whenever a new subject arises, or whenever a request for information is a bit out of the ordinary, the letter is brought to my attention and answered by me personally." ²²⁵

* from *Movie Weekly*, February 18, 1922

HOW TO GET INTO THE MOVIES

by Mabel Normand

Editor's note. -- The screen's cleverest comedienne reveals in her series of ten articles entitled "HOW TO GET INTO THE MOVIES," the secrets of motion picture success, and incidentally, a great deal of that lovable personality and sincerity that has made her a queen of the silver screen. If you have any questions to ask about any points in this first article or any of the ten articles that will follow, just write to Miss Normand, care of "Movie Weekly."

I. The Movies As A Career For Girls

I have always said that advice is the cheapest thing in the world, hence the most worthless.

So I propose only to chat with you and give you my views of the screen as a career for girls.

I have had so many letters -- millions it seems to me -- from girls who want me to tell them the truth about the business.

I have wanted to answer, but each time I have sat down with my secretary to dictate a nice, motherly sermon, I have felt as much at sea as the ones who ask for advice.

And let me say a word right here, girls about the letters you write me and to other stars.

We appreciate them -- truly we do. We are ordinary human beings, quickly touched by sincerity and appreciation. But it is terribly hard to talk to people we do not know. I think I could tell pretty well whether a girl had screen possibilities if I met her, and yet Luck -- that strange, capricious god -- plays such curious tricks that predictions are unsafe. A radiant beauty with loads of personality might never get a part, while an ugly duckling might slip in and make good over night.

There has been so much unconscionable stuff written as advice to screen-struck girls that I feel in the class with an oil stock promoter or a gold brick salesman in undertaking this series of articles.

In the first place, I object to that term "screen-struck."

Ambition is never to be scoffed at whether it is ambition to be a screen actress or a good stenographer. But, of course, there is a vast difference between real ambition and just silly vanity.

And, girls, you are so liable to fool yourselves and try to see what qualities you have and what you have not.

If you are determined, in spite of handicaps, to be a screen actress, set about cultivating the qualities you need.

I am not a New Thought advocate, but I do believe a person can accomplish just about anything if the desire is sufficiently strong to breed tenacity.

In stating the qualities desirable in one who would seek work in the studios, please do not think I claim all such qualities for myself. I am as much a student now as I was when I started. Indeed, I am a great deal more studious now than I was a few years ago. I have learned that happiness in life is attained only through the work that enables us to forget life. I believe that is a line from W. L. George's "A Bed of Roses."

Therefore prepare to enjoy your work, to desire your work, and not the fruits of it.

Anzia Yezierska, that splendid short story writer, once quoted a Hindoo proverb which says: "Work for results, but leave the results with God."

Luxury is an illusion. Too many girls want a screen career because they believe it will give them luxury. If that is the real desire, forget the screen and stay where you are. Because if you become successful enough to have luxury you will have so much work and so much responsibility that you will have little time to enjoy it.

Desire for the work and nothing else should be considered in choosing the screen as a career.

So many people in writing about the movies as a career for girls rant about the tremendous difficulties, as though every profession -- and life itself -- were not filled with difficulties.

I believe the only difference between the screen and other businesses as regards difficulties is the attitude on the part of workers.

²²⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 1916.

Girls who start out to be good school teachers go into a hard training. They go through high school and a teacher's training course of two or three or four years. Then they start in a small position at sixty or seventy dollars a month. They do not expect sudden success. They expect to devote a lifetime in the pursuit of success.

But what is the usual attitude of a girl entering upon a screen career?

She usually does not prepare herself at all. She goes to a studio and expects to make a living at once.

Most girls are unwilling to give the same time and study to the screen that they would give to another profession.

A girl may start as a saleslady or switch-board operator and make a weekly wage from the outset. It may be a small stipend, but it is something on which she can count every week.

The screen is not that way. It is a precarious business. A beginner, if lucky, may land "extra" work immediately at five dollars a day, and work every day for two or three weeks. Then she may be idle for three or four weeks or even months.

Therefore I would say, never attempt a screen career if you need steady income. If you have no money, either give up the idea of entering pictures, or else save enough money at some other work until you have enough to support you for a year.

Never start penniless for Hollywood or New York. I would want at least five hundred dollars and a good sense of economy before I undertook a campaign for work in a strange place.

In this series of chats with you I am not going to be pessimistic. I believe there are great opportunities for beginners in motion pictures. The screen needs new personalities constantly; it must continually change in order to keep fresh and vigorous. But no girl should undertake the first step on the road to Hollywood until she understands clearly just what she has to face. I am going to try to reveal the conditions.

As for the moral phase of screen work I have little to say. It seems to me that one needs character to steer a safe course in any profession or in any city. This much I do say, that the film work offers plenty of temptations.

One of the worst temptations is that of succumbing to vanity and getting a false perspective upon oneself and upon the world.

Character is absolutely essential not only for your personal welfare off-screen, but for your work.

Character photographs, as you must know if you are a keen student of the motion picture. It is the character of Mary Pickford shining through her beauty that makes us love her. Without that spiritual illumination Mary Pickford would never have so many admirers, great actress though she is.

The great differences between the stage and the screen as I see it is this:

On the stage you may disguise your self in a characterization; on the screen you absolutely reveal your self no matter what character you play.

That may seem a striking statement, but I believe it.

A girl with a selfish, unkind disposition can never earn any great amount of success playing lovely characters. I have formed this conclusion from studying girls who, although given as much opportunity as Mary Pickford, have failed lamentably.

The *real* of you -- call it character, soul, personality or what you will -- must stand the photographic test, just as your features must.

Thus in cultivating yourself for the screen you are cultivating yourself for life, developing the best that is in you, perfecting yourself as a human being.

In our next chat I will describe as nearly as possible the types of girls which producers seek, the types which have the best chance for breaking into a studio and remaining there.

-- Mabel Normand.

* from *Movie Weekly*, February 25, 1922

II. Types of Girls That Producers Seek

The casting director -- that gentleman to whom you must go for employment -- divides players into two general classifications. They are "leads" or they are "character" actors.

By "leads" he means people who play leading roles -- the heroes and the heroines. Character actors are those who do the dirty work -- villains, vampires, and other "heavies" as we call them in studio parlance. They also play mother and father roles, foreigners, etc. I believe George Jean Nathan defines a character actor as one who is able to keep a trick moustache from falling off. That is an excellent definition for the movie character actor, because he is an expert in makeup. Lon Chaney is one of the finest character actors, a veritable miracle man of makeup.

Girls seeking a career on the screen generally think only of leading roles. They want to be pretty and adorable. Their goal is stardom, and few character actors ever achieve that rank, because the public idolizes only "The good, the true and the beautiful."

Furthermore, a girl starting in motion pictures has had little or no experience (I am not supposing that you already are an actress), hence she hasn't the knowledge of intricate makeup. Yet she already may be a certain "type." She may be the 'slavey' type, such as ZaSu Pitts, or she may be a distinctly foreign type -- perhaps the Spanish type such as we sought for my latest picture, "Suzanna."

But unless she is a decided type, she must expect to play "straight" parts or leading roles.

On the screen you must have the appearance of the character which you assume. It would be difficult to believe in Mary Pickford if she played a vampire, because there is nothing about her that suggests such a character. On the screen you are almost X-Rayed; you are held before the spectator in merciless close-ups which reveal every lineament and, I think, the underlying character.

For this reason directors seek "types" -- people who look the parts they are to play.

The girl who has the best chance of breaking into the studios is not the character type, but the pretty girl who will serve for "atmosphere" or minor roles that require no characterization; for you must know that directors require odd types only now and then. Usually they want people who have some experience.

Producers are not searching for character actresses; but are searching for girls and young men who have personality suitable for leading roles.

In one breath a producer will cry for new faces and in the next warn young people of no experience that they have little chance of getting into pictures. Producers want new personalities with years of experience. That is rather impossible. But the producer is not the most reasonable person in the world. Yet he honestly does want to make discoveries. What one would not like to find a potential Pickford, or Pola Negri, or Lillian Gish?

But it takes a discerning eye to discover such potentialities in a beginner. One may easily pick a gold brick for the real eighteen-karat stuff.

The only attributes of which a producer may be positive are the physical. He knows a pretty girl when he sees one, hence she has more in her favor than the girl who is not pretty, even though the latter may have more innate dramatic talent.

Therefore, the girl who is most in demand is the one who has qualities that may lead to her exploitation in leading roles.

She must be small, because a small woman is supposed to be more appealing and because she may play youthful roles that a large woman could not.

Five feet three is considered the average height for leading women. Some of us are not that tall, a few are taller.

She must be young. In fact, youth comes before all else in consideration. A woman of thirty should never consider the screen as a career unless she wants to play character roles and even then she hasn't great opportunities. The public demands extreme youth of its heroines. A young woman may play a wider variety of role than an older woman. She may play a child or she may, by use of makeup, appear a woman of middle age. But there are very few women of middle age who can play the part of children.

Slenderness is another requisite. Fat is anathema to the screen actress. The camera enlarges, thus a person who is just pleasantly plump in real life appears fat on screen. Miss Pickford weighs one hundred and five. Anita Stewart, who is somewhat taller, weighs one hundred and ten or thereabouts.

While a woman need not be beautiful, she cannot be absolutely homely. She must have some features to recommend her to the eye of the casting director. Consider any of the screen stars and you will find some points of beauty that are remarkable: Pola Negri's eyes and figure; Anita Stewart's eyes, hair and lovely slenderness; Bebe Daniels' eyes, figure and rich coloring.

I know a beautiful girl who has been playing "extras" for two years. Only recently she secured a small part. Most of the time she was without any sort of work, dependent entirely on the money she received from home. She has an unusually lovely face and a nice personality. Her trouble? She is plump and has thick ankles. If she is able to reduce, the ankles may be forgiven her. But you see how exacting the producer and the camera -- can be.

The pretty girl, petite and well-formed, unquestionably has the easiest start. She may not qualify but she has her chance.

Consider the beautiful girls who have started with Mack Sennett -- Gloria Swanson, Marie Prevost, Harriet Hammond and innumerable others. Their beauty gave them access to the studio, and once in they applied themselves sufficiently to become genuine actresses.

Beauty alone will not make one a tremendously popular star. There must also be individuality, but that oftentimes is developed. I will have more to say about personality in another chat.

* from *Movie Weekly*, March 4, 1922

III. Is Beauty Essential?

Yes.

Beauty is essential to a girl's success in pictures.

But what is beauty?

You may have it and not know it.

Or you may think you have it and be the only one to appreciate it.

There is no use being kind and sweet and coy about the subject of beauty. A girl who has a lovely face certainly has far more chance of entering motion pictures than a girl who has not. But a girl does not have to be a Venus.

In my opinion Venus would never have a look in. Oh, perhaps she might play mother roles.

We used to consider Lillian Russell and Maxine Elliot as the ideals of feminine pulchritude. They were the standards by which we measured ourselves several years ago.

The screen, however, has established a new type -- the slight, petite, small featured girl.

You may not know it, but the camera enlarges frightfully.

A woman of medium size appears large on the screen. A large woman appears gauche.

Furthermore, as I have already said, the small woman can play a variety of parts, particularly if she has youth.

Yet if we consider the beauties of all time we find that they all were celebrated for something besides regular features, nice eyes and pearly teeth. Everyone knows that the personal charm and character of Lillian Russell are what give distinction to her beauty. Without these great assets she might never have been considered the queen of the fair.

There are very few screen beauties who are perfect from the artist's standpoint, although a great many have served as artist's models.

But most of them have some distinguishing feature of beauty -- *and know how to feature this feature.*

There is scarcely a girl who can not be transformed by a coiffure. You must learn the style of hair dress which becomes you most and stick to it.

Study yourself with the idea of discovering your most attractive feature -- eyes, hair, nose, mouth, throat, figure. Then do the best you can to play up this gift.

With the present day accessories of the toilet and the scientific knowledge on beauty subjects, a girl should be able to improve herself fifty percent or more.

No one is tricked by makeup -- unless the makeup is so clever that it is scarcely makeup.

Expressions also should be studied. An ugly expression may destroy an otherwise beautiful effect; a beautiful expression may so illuminate an ugly face as to make it beautiful.

In studying expressions and cultivating the right sort, be careful to avoid affectations.

In my opinion affectation nullifies all claim for beauty.

Have you ever seen an affected self-conscious man? Do you think him handsome?

Do you suppose, then, that men -- or other women -- would consider you beautiful if you had affectations and plainly showed that you thought yourself incomparable?

Beauty may be developed physically, mentally and scientifically.

You may develop clear complexion, lustrous eyes, healthy condition of the hair and symmetry of physique by exercise: walking, golfing, swimming, dancing, riding horseback, playing tennis. My favorite exercise is swimming; next to that dancing. I believe that both forms of exercise are particularly good for the body. They increase flexibility, develop symmetry and grace, impart the color, the glow and the alertness that are the high notes of youth.

Above all, EXERCISE.

Some people will disagree with me and say that the mental or spiritual state is of more importance in the development of beauty. But, inasmuch as I am talking to girls, I am stressing healthy, physical exercise because I believe it stimulates healthy, clean and good-looking thoughts.

The thing we call disposition -- which is simply being agreeable and thoughtful of others -- actually plays a tremendous part in your beauty. I am not one of those philosophical old souls who chatter about Good Thoughts in embroidered motto form. I speak of Thought as a Force, and we know it is a force of incalculable power. Mind can do anything -- consider the wireless telephones. Only the other night I talked from Los Angeles to an assemblage of four thousand people almost two thousand miles away. If such miracles are possible, why not others? They are.

The camera penetrates makeup and proves incontrovertibly that Beauty is not just skin deep. And the screen has made us keener of eye in observing people. Most of us can determine rather quickly the sort of human being a person is by the play of expression on the face. If we do not like those expressions it doesn't matter much how regular the features may be or how exquisite the coloring; there is no attraction to hold the eye.

If you believe you have certain features which are of photographic value and have decided to go into pictures be sure to make the most of your appearance when you call upon the casting director. He is the court of first decision -- and sometimes last.

Don't try to vamp him. Don't try to act at all. All acting must be done before you ever see him. I mean you must have cultivated your appearance and your expression so that you need not think about yourself when you ask for a job.

Above all, don't weigh yourself with makeup. If you have a naturally beautiful complexion, leave it alone. You will be notable in comparison to the many painted-and-powdered girls whom the director sees every day. Dress in good taste and in a way that becomes you. No intelligent, observing girl of today needs to be told that simplicity is the secret of smart dress. Care as to detail is important -- trim shoes and stockings, a new hat of becoming lines, nails perfectly manicured and hair dressed as exquisitely as fingers can do it. Combine this care of detail with cleanliness and the sparkle of health and most any girl will have attraction if not downright beauty. If, in addition, she has the manners that betoken breeding and the smile that indicates charm and humor -- well, the chances are she will be asked her name and telephone number -- and will receive a call the next time the casting director wants "extras."

Beauty and personality are complementary. One aids the other. Sometimes we call a girl beautiful, whereas she would be very plain were it not for the charm she radiates. Again, a beautiful face plus an amiable manner gives a girl the reputation for personality that she might not have if the beauty were absent.

After all, it is individuality rather than prettiness that establishes a person. You recognize Bebe Daniels' mouth because it is different; Gloria's uplifted tilt nose, because it is distinctive; Nazimova's eyes because they are unlike any other pair of eyes...

Because personality is the very life of beauty I consider it more important. Personality cannot be manufactured, but like beauty, it can be developed to some extent. Next week I'm going to talk about it.

* from *Movie Weekly*, March 11, 1922

IV. Developing Personality

The greatest individual asset -- or liability -- is personality.

It operates for or against your success whether you be an actress or a saleswoman. But it is particularly important to the actress.

Just what do we mean by personality?

We mean that which distinguishes or characterizes a person -- the quality that causes us to like or dislike a person.

It is more important than beauty. In fact, beauty without it is nothing. You may recall a number of pretty women who have not gone very far on the screen simply because they lacked distinction. They made no impression upon you. It was difficult for you to remember them.

I will go even farther and say that personality is more important than acting ability, at least so far as the screen is concerned. Personality is the most important pigment with which a screen player portrays character. The camera examining your every gesture and lineament, is sure to reveal the personality under the makeup. And such personality is a composite of so many attributes -- expression, movement, appearance -- it is the very soul and body of the character which you delineate.

Furthermore, the most popular screen players are those who are loved for themselves, for their personalities. That is why you are so bitterly disappointed when you find that your favorite has faults just like the rest of humanity. You feel that an idol is made of superior stuff and has no rights to human failings. This proves that it is

not his acting ability which causes you to admire him, for if that were so you would regard him more impersonally and go on admiring him no matter what his personal life might be.

The person who starts out in pictures today with the aim of becoming a public favorite must set up for himself a model. He must expect to mold not only his expression but his personality, his character, his very manner of living.

Most people believe that personality is a gift, which you either have or you have not.

Every human being has some sort of personality, otherwise a lot of us would be alike. But, while every human being has some distinguishing trait, it may not be sufficiently marked to attract either likes or dislikes. We call such a person "pale" or indefinite. He is the fellow who can be in a party a whole day and no one takes notice of him.

Perhaps such a person is suffering from what psycho-analysis call an "inferiority complex." I believe some of these gentleman say that Shakespeare suffered from the same! Therefore there can be no reason for discouragement. All such a person needs is to cultivate enough confidence in himself to express his personality. He needs recharging, more electricity, so to speak.

Again there is the person who has manners or expressions which are annoying or disagreeable. He may not be aware of them, but he should certainly be aware that there is something wrong with him and set about finding out what it is.

A very good way of determining whether or not you have a personality that is pleasing is by noting how popular you are among your fellow students or colleagues. You've seen kids at school who were always the center of a group. Why? Because they had personalities.

In attempting to cultivate your own personality first observe what qualities or manners you admire in others.

Or, better still, observe what you dislike in others, and then weed such characteristics out of your own system.

For instance, I abhor artificiality. A poseur to me is impossible. I could never pretend to be something that I am not because I so detest pretense in others.

You understand then, that I do not urge you to affect manners or qualities that are not naturally yours. But perhaps they are yours and you have not brought them to the surface, or perhaps they can be developed naturally.

The loveliest of all human qualities, I think is sympathy. The kind sympathetic person who always thinks first of the other person, strives to understand that person and be interested in his interests is a person who is bound to be popular. And that quality of sympathy shows on the screen. We say a person has "appeal" oftentimes when we mean that they show sympathy.

Now every human being has been endowed with some portion of sympathy. You will note that children as a rule, show marked sympathies for people, animals, and even toys. You've seen a mother pretend to cry in order to win a child to do what she wishes. And you've seen that little child's face cloud with deep concern when he thought his mother was weeping. That is innate sympathy. The trouble is that we often submerge it through selfishness, disillusionment or just because we don't think it proper to show our feelings.

We repress too much, we Americans. If more people let go of themselves and expressed the good that was in them we'd be surprised to find human beings much nicer than we thought they were.

Charm is but the expression of beautiful thoughts and feelings.

In order to have beautiful thoughts and feelings you must turn your thoughts outward -- out toward other people and other things. Take an interest in your friend's affairs and strive to sympathize. You will learn something about human nature, as well as develop something within yourself. Also read, read, read, read. And try always to read with sympathy. Don't say, "Oh, I love that character!" or "I hate her!" A human being is complex, with traits good and bad. Simply strive to understand a character, its motives and mental processes.

There is also a physical side to personality. The way you walk and gesture is a part of it. Therefore, as with beauty, exercise is important. Not only important in developing bodily grace, but in developing the self-confidence and assurance that the athlete invariably has. Learn to dance, skate, swim, ride horseback, drive a car, play tennis and golf. You will be required to do many of these things in pictures, so you are not wasting time by any means. Knowing how to do things is a distinct personality asset.

Personality is not just a surgery tea-table affair as many people seem to think. It is real and rugged, showing to as much advantage in one society as in another, as much at home outdoors as within. A person who cannot adapt herself to all sorts of people and surroundings cannot get very far as a picture actress, who is required to assume a different character in different surroundings every six or seven weeks.

I could write a volume about personality without helping you any more to develop it, so let's quit and next week talk about the best school in screen acting.

* from *Movie Weekly*, March 18, 1922

V. The Best School for Screen Study

Many girls have written to me about schools for motion picture acting. Several have had unfortunate experiences with persons who offered to teach them "the secrets of acting."

In the first place there are no "secrets" that I know of. And so far as I know there are no real schools for instructing in the art of screen technique.

In time, there may be such schools, but I doubt it. At present, there are none that I can recommend, and none that are endorsed by leading directors or stars of the industry. Therefore, beware of them.

If you have plenty of money, you may find it profitable to take a course at one of the reputable schools of dramatic art. There are two or three schools which have been established for a number of years and which can point to students who have gone from them to successful careers on the stage.

The same acting ability is required for the stage as for the screen except that the stage requires vocal training while the screen requires more facial expression. But both of them require the development of imagination, the ability to feel and to express in an accurate and effective manner.

Most aspirants for screen careers have not the money, however, to spend on special training courses. For the few schools of dramatic art that are worth while are expensive.

Experience is always a recommendation, and if a person can find an opening in a stock company or any other theatrical organization he should make the most of it. Work on the stage gives one poise and self-assurance. A great many successful screen stars have started on the stage -- Mary Pickford, Lillian Gish, Dorothy Gish and others.

Still there are other stars who have gone directly to the studios and gained success.

Because the screen is developing a separate and distinctive art, I believe that the best way is to start as an "extra" in a studio.

But there are several courses which you may develop for yourselves in preparing for a career.

The best textbook of screen acting is the screen itself. By studying the work of leading players you can learn a great deal. I know I can. If observing, you can learn what not to do as well as what to do.

Naturalness is the most important element in acting. To develop naturalness you must develop understanding of human nature. You must be able to determine just what a certain type of person would do in a certain situation.

In "Molly-O," for instance, I was given the situation of a girl from the slums entering a beautiful and luxurious mansion. What would my feelings be as a washerwoman's daughter coming into a beautiful kitchen? I would be curious, of course, and very intent upon the surroundings. I must not affect curiosity, I must feel curious. Then I saw the serving man taking cakes from a box and placing them on a plate. They were very good looking cakes, and naturally I developed interest in them. I wanted one terribly. For a moment my conscience argued with my appetite. I argued the thing over to myself. Then, suddenly, my hand shot into the jar and I took one and stuffed it into my mouth as though doing it while my conscience wasn't looking. After the first cookie, the process was easier. I couldn't get enough of them. There were several emotions in conflict even in such a little scene.

The conflict of conscience and appetite, the fear of being apprehended, the delight at the first taste of a delicious cake such as I never tasted before, and the feverish haste with which I secured more of them and secreted them about myself.

It is very easy to do such things after the business has been thought out by the star and the director, but the important thing is to feel the impulses that prompt the action. You must place yourself entirely in the character's place and feel exactly what she would feel in such a situation, otherwise your expression would fall short of realism and be nothing but "mugging." While watching an actress going through a scene on the screen, ask yourself whether or not you would do the things she does. If not, what would you do? How would you improve on her work? Wherein does her work ring false and why?

Reading is also a great aid toward developing an understanding of character. Endeavor to be the character that an author is depicting, to feel as such a character would feel, to express, if possible, the thoughts and sensations which she would express.

Reading also familiarizes you with the mental processes of people with whom you might never come in contact. And it may help you to understand those with whom you do come in contact.

Haven't you often found a character in fiction that reminded you of someone whom you know? Perhaps through that character you understood more clearly the sort of person your friend is, the reasons she does certain things which you would not do and the effects she creates by so doing.

Psychology, of course, is one of the most profitable studies of a person who would be an interpreter of human nature. It is the key by which you enter the characters of others and experience their emotions.

A writer once said that to be an artist you must become a fluid through which other lives may be pictured. In order to do this you must lose yourself in thinking of others, in contemplating them and striving to understand them.

A selfish person could never be a great artist because his thoughts turn inward and he loses sight of the things which he must see in order to portray.

A ceaseless pursuit of information and a constant observation of all that pertains to life -- to such you must dedicate yourself if you are to become an artist.

Robert Louis Stevenson in his little book on how to write tells how he used to sit down and jot sudden impressions or descriptions of objects which struck him as unusual.

An artist -- Charlie Chaplin, for instance -- is constantly absorbing. He sees the elaborate electrical equipment in a modern hotel which supplies you ingeniously with all sorts of service, and suddenly he conceives a comedy built about a world that runs entirely by electricity, where your every desire is satisfied by pressing a button. The idea is good. He puts it away in a corner of his mind. Perhaps he will use it later, or perhaps it will lead to other ideas for comedy business.

To prepare for a career in motion pictures you must develop your powers of observation, sensation and understanding. The schools that I endorse are the screen -- the library -- and life.

* from *Movie Weekly*, March 25, 1922

VI. Keep A Diary!

I'm going to chat about my hobby this time, because I think it is a valuable hobby.

I'm going to urge you to do something which your mothers probably have already urged you to do -- keep a diary.

I suppose all of us have been presented with diaries when we were young. They are the inevitable Christmas or birthday gift. We usually start out well with them and wish that more space had been allotted to each day, as we have so much to say! Then pretty soon we wonder why so much space has been allotted when every day is just like the one preceding. And finally, along about the second month, we give it up.

Yet there must be value in diary-keeping, otherwise the darned books wouldn't have been invented and parents wouldn't be urging them upon their young.

A scenario writer of my acquaintance always was toting a diary with her. And nearly every time I met her she would jot down something in her little book.

"Now what are you writing?" I would demand.

"Oh, just jotting down what you said," she would reply. "You pulled a good line, and I may want to use it for a sub-title or something."

That gave me an idea. If a scenario writer can get ideas from everybody and everything, why not an actress?

Then, too, I read a great deal, and I like to remember what I read. In fact, I have a special contempt for people who can't remember what they read. It shows lack of appreciation or concentration. And you need both if you are to be an artist or an educated human being.

When I go to see one of my pictures I take notes of what gets over and what fails to get the proper effect. Like a writer who reads his own work after it is printed in order to get a clear, fresh perspective on its value, a star needs to see her picture in a theatre in order to gauge its effect.

Since the memory is the treasury of the mind you should stock it well whether you are to be a motion picture actress or a good housewife. One of the best memory aids in the world is the notebook.

In speaking of a diary I do not mean the sort that foolish high school girls keep and into which they pour their transient heart-burnings. A diary may be so impersonal that all might read it without learning anything concerning the keeper's private affairs.

It is a waste of time to keep one of those in which you say, "Went to lunch today with Sally, met Joe, got a crush, crazy about Dolly's new hat, going to copy it, etc., etc." That's nonsense.

But it is worthwhile setting down observations of books, plays, clothes, paintings, music and incidents that furnish you with ideas. A note-book is a means of self-expression. It disciplines the mind in formulating thought into concise definite ideas.

An excellent model for a writer is Chekov's notebook, into which the great Russian writer poured random impressions, phrases that occurred to him as vivid, experiences that suggested stories or mental images.

Because it is an actress' work to portray characters realistically it is necessary for her to observe all sorts of characters and to remember how they appeared.

When in New York I often go down in the tenement district of the East Side in order to see how the people live and work and act in that strange melting pot. I note the women gossiping at the corner, their manner of dress, their walk, their gestures. I note the women selling fruit and fish from a push cart, the way she attracts attention, the way she bargains, the way she arranges her goods. Perhaps I see a character that strikes me as funny, either in deportment or way of dressing. Perhaps I can copy her costume or some of her odd gestures at a later date, when I'm working in a picture. At least they are worth remembering.

My costume for "Molly-O" is almost a duplicate of one worn by a girl I saw on the East Side; it appealed to me as a ludicrous yet pathetic attempt toward style, just the sort of dress which I later wanted for the characterization of "Molly-O."

It is very easy to originate funny clothes and manners for pictures but unless they have their counterpoint in life and seem natural they are only fit for burlesque. One may exaggerate so easily and spoil a character, for there is a very fine line between human comedy and slapstick burlesque.

You may wonder what all this has to do with breaking into the movies.

As I said in a previous chat, too few girls aim at any preparation for a career in pictures. They often decide to go into pictures because it looks easier than working! They think that all one needs to do is make pretty faces and dress fashionably. Those are the girls who drift about Hollywood for a year or two and then disappear or find the easy way of livelihood which they erroneously supposed that the movie offered.

I know a young man who came out here some time ago and broke in almost immediately. He happened to be good-looking, but that wasn't the reason the producer preferred him to top actors of experience.

"He has breeding," said the director. "He doesn't have to act as a gentleman; he is a gentleman."

Old standards are rapidly giving way to new. The pretty face has been tried and found wanting. More and more is culture required, at least an education that embraces an understanding of people. Of a young girl who flashed for a moment into prominence and then disappeared, I heard a director remark:

"Yes, she is a beauty -- but what a dumbbell!"

I don't pretend to claim that an actress must know scientific and algebraic formulas or other subjects of higher education. I only say that she must have an alert, comprehending mind that can grasp the information which she requires and adapt it to her work.

Furthermore, a girl who is proficient in a number of things has alternatives in the event that she does not find herself suited to screen work.

I know a very charming young girl who appeared to have screen talent. She played a part in a Douglas Fairbanks picture, but did not photograph as well as had been expected. She might have struggled on and played more or less regularly in minor parts, but she very sensibly saw her own shortcomings and decided that her métier was not acting. She decided to write. She set about an intensive study of scenario writing and finally obtained a position at thirty dollars a week. Two years later she was receiving two hundred a week. I'm sure she derives far more satisfaction out of being a successful scenarioist than she would have derived from being a mediocre actress.

Keeping a diary is only a means of disciplining the eye and the mind.

If each night you sit down and record the most interesting observation of the day you will soon find that you are observing interesting things more closely and that you are retaining ideas and impressions more accurately.

At college a girl always carries a notebook to lectures. Why not carry a notebook, then when you are attending the school of life? I do not mean that you must go about scribbling on a pad as though you were a sanitation inspector; just keep one at home and use it as a confessional at night. You may want to make some notes about Hollywood conditions, of which, I shall chat in the next installment.

* from *Movie Weekly*, April 1, 1922

VII. Hollywood Conditions

There are so many misconceptions concerning studio conditions on the West Coast that I feel it is necessary to tell you some facts.

By far the largest part of film production is carried on in California, hence a person has a better chance of breaking into pictures here than in New York, where there are always a great many experienced stage actors out of work.

The motion picture studios of California are not grouped together on one street or even in one town.

Los Angeles, I believe, covers more ground than any city in the United States. Through and around it are the various studios.

Hollywood is a suburb about a half-hour's trolleying distance from downtown Los Angeles. It is considered the center of the studio section, but there are also studios at Culver City, ten or twelve miles beyond Hollywood, and there are studios on the other side of the city.

The great distances which separate the studios are a source of difficulty to the beginner, who must necessarily do a good deal of studio visiting.

Because the largest and most active producing units are located in Hollywood it would seem that here is the best place to live. But I believe that living accommodations are a trifle more expensive in Hollywood than in Los Angeles.

If a girl comes to Hollywood unchaperoned she should go at once to the studio club and register. This club has for its patronesses a number of prominent women of the film world, and is related to the Y. W. C. A.

The club house is a beautiful old Southern mansion located just a block above Hollywood Boulevard. It accommodates from twenty to forty girls, I believe, and about twice that number can be accommodated as boarders. The meals and rooms are extremely cheap.

Of course, there is usually a waiting list of applicants for rooms at this club. Any girl can join the club and have the freedom of its living rooms. Here you will meet other girls who are beginners in some branch of business, and from them you may get valuable tips concerning work and the way to go about getting it.

In the event that you are unable to reside at the Studio Club you should be able to get a very nice room elsewhere for five or six dollars a week.

I believe that one can live as cheaply in Hollywood as in any other part of the United States, and much more cheaply than in a large city.

As I have said before, do not start for Hollywood or for New York unless you have enough money to keep you for several months -- and enough to take home in the event you find no opportunity.

Upon arrival in Los Angeles, take a trolley to Hollywood. Go at once to the Studio Club, which can be easily located by inquiry, and ask the matron concerning living quarters. If the club house is filled, a list of good rooming houses can be supplied to you.

There have been so many sensational stories written about Hollywood that some people seem to have the idea that it is a very unsafe place in which to live. I find that the general conception of its inhabitants is that they are closely akin to the Apaches of Paris.

Nothing could be more absurd. Hollywood is a quiet little village. Only a small percentage of its population consists of film people. There are no night cafes or dance places in the entire town. The only amusement places, in fact, are three or four small movie theatres. By ten o'clock in the evening Hollywood Boulevard, which is the main thoroughfare, is as quiet as the main street of any village. The "night life" of which you have read so much is not in evidence.

You will find all sorts of people in the film colony, for it has brought people from all classes and all quarters of the globe. It is up to you to pick your associates. There are teas and dances given at the Studio Club at which you will have an opportunity to meet a great many charming young girls who are serious artists. Among them you will find girls who, like yourself, are trying to break into pictures. They will be able to tell you the best way to take. There are also girls engaged in scenario writing, costume designing, magazine writing and other phases of work pertaining to the industry.

You should not miss an opportunity of meeting people connected with pictures, for through them you may find the opportunity which you seek. Make friends especially with the girls who are doing "extra" work, for you will probably have to start as they are starting and every bit of information they can give you will be of value.

I have visited the Studio Club at various times and I have found that the girls who live there are charming and refined. Many of them are college girls of splendid education and talents. They are easy to know and for the most part, I think, extremely sympathetic toward the newcomer, for they remember the time when they came as strangers without any knowledge of the business.

Let me say here that right now the conditions in the studios are not favorable toward a beginner. The business depression throughout the country has affected the theatre business to some extent and there is not as much work in the studios as there will be in a few months. I believe that the fall will find Hollywood much busier, although there always seem to be plenty of applicants for jobs.

As soon as you have become settled you should at once set about looking for work. the sooner you learn the ropes the sooner will an opportunity be presented for employment.

Don't be led astray into taking courses at any school of moving picture acting in Los Angeles. I know of none that I can recommend. By mingling with the girls who play "extras" you can find out when the studios are in need of "atmosphere" -- that is what they call extra players who appear in ballroom scenes, mobs, and the like. The pay for this ranges from five to seven and a half per day. Some studios supply costumes. Others will want you to supply your own. But do not invest in an elaborate wardrobe unless you have plenty of money to spare. An evening gown certainly would be of service, but it need not be an expensive one.

Because the studios are refraining from producing pictures which require a great number of people, times are hard at present for the "extra" folk, yet some are always in demand at certain studios. If you once become established you will get calls when special productions of this sort are being made. At first, however, you must expect to make the calls. Although producers say they want new faces for the screen they are not going up and down the streets looking for them. Very few new faces are "discovered" outside the studio walls, so your problem will be to get inside and attract attention.

In our next chat I will attempt to outline more fully the way of going about job-hunting, a task which requires, for the most part, individual initiative. There are, however, certain things which are worth knowing before you start the rounds.

* from *Movie Weekly*, April 8, 1922

VIII.

As I said in the previous chat, your first stop in Hollywood should be at the Studio Club, where you may get some tips as to employment, and learn in particular, the studios which are using "extras."

You must know that certain pictures require only a small cast, while others have scenes that call for a large number of people. Such scenes may take only a day to shoot; then again they may run along for a week or more.

Occasionally a studio inserts a notice in the papers calling for extras. Usually, however, they can get all they want by telephoning those whom they have listed and whom they have employed before.

Unless you are exceptionally fortunate, you will have to take your place in line with those who patiently wait at the casting offices of the studios. It is impossible for me or anyone to tell you how to attract the attention of the casting director or his assistant who stands behind the little window marked "casting department."

In a previous article I did advise you about your appearance. Dress neatly in your best suit. See that your shoes are trim and polished, your nails manicured and your hair done in its most becoming fashion. Do not attempt to attract attention by gaudy clothes or affected manner. The scenes which call for "extras" are usually ballroom scenes, cafes or social functions of some sort, and for these girls are required who appear to be ladies.

If possible make the acquaintance of someone who can introduce you to the casting director or his assistant. Even though there is no work at the moment he will be able to give you some advice and probably will tell you to register at an exchange from which "extras" are employed. This exchange is a regular employment agency for players who do "atmosphere" or "bits."

It will be necessary for you to have photographs of yourself to leave at this exchange and at the offices of the casting directors. Before you have finished you will find that you need several dozen, for once you part with them you will see them no more. They will be placed on a file with a card giving information as to your appearance, your previous experience if any, your address and telephone number.

Decide at the outset that you have perseverance and that you will keep going the rounds until you get in. Don't feel that you are being turned down when the casting director tells you coldly that there is nothing doing. He probably speaks the truth. There are no companies needing extras at a special time. Ask him in your best manner to take your name and telephone number in the event that something turns up later. Casting directors usually are willing to register applicants.

I would try to first find someone who could introduce me or give me a note to a casting director, or to someone in a studio who would perform the introduction. Then I would make my call at once. It will be impossible, of course, to get letters to all the studios. Those where you have no introduction must be approached, as I have said, through the casting office.

Get a list of all the studios in Hollywood, Culver City and Los Angeles. Visit each in turn until you have made yourself known to the casting office -- then keep on going until you are given a chance to earn an extra's pay.

It's hard work, this making the rounds. You will have to spend a good many hours on the trolley going from Hollywood to Los Angeles, from Los Angeles to Culver City or Edendale, or out to the Selig studio near East Lake Park. It's tiresome and discouraging as are all pursuits that are worth while. But if you start out with determination and optimism you will be able to enjoy the game of it. By making friends you will find the road more congenial and much, much easier.

A great deal is said about the necessity for "pull" in getting into pictures. "Pull" means simply friendships. You will have a better chance of getting into any business and securing promotions if you have friends in that business. Personality counts off screen as well as on. An engaging, genial person soon has a lot of acquaintances, some of whom are traveling the same road as she is and others who may be somewhat ahead in the game. It isn't necessary to make a chum of everyone you meet, but it does no harm to make a friend of everyone.

You will find that there are a great many people in the film game who are not your sort, people with whom you haven't a great deal in common, but there is no harm in being friendly toward them. Every girl must cultivate tact, if she doesn't already possess it, for it will be needed in making friends and also in keeping from being drawn too intimately into associations that she does not desire. It is fine to be a good fellow -- the right sort of good fellow. Directors like to have players who are cheerful, who can mix fun with work and who can endure hardships without grumbling. A girl who can live up to Kipling's poem "If" should have a great future in films. But a lot of beginners imagine that being a "good fellow" means doing exactly what others do. That isn't so. People respect you for having the character to do what you want to do, provided that in so doing you do not interfere with the rights of others. You do not have to go on parties to be a good fellow. You only have to be amiable, sincere, and always on the job at the studio. A girl who stays up late at night is not going to appear at her best at nine o'clock in the morning when the studios start work. Of course, you need recreation, but be conservative. If you want to go to a dance, make it a week-end night when there is no work the next day. I have made it a habit to go to bed early every night previous to a working day. Sometimes I retire as early as eight o'clock, have my dinner served in bed and just read and relax until sleep comes. Sleep is the greatest beautifier and health-giver in the world. And you cannot have too much of beauty or of health.

I cannot tell you in advance just which studios will be needing girls for extra work, but I do advise you to pay special attention to those which make comedies -- such studios as the Mack Sennett, Christie, Hal Roach, Buster Keaton, Vitagraph and Universal. A producer of two-reel comedies is willing to take an inexperienced girl if she is pretty, because not much acting ability is required for minor parts in comedies. There are plenty who are attractive to the eye, perhaps, but not many who stand the camera test.

I consider the two-reel comedies the best primary schools of motion picture work. They make you over-act, and that is a good thing, for the trouble with most young actresses is that they cannot let go of their emotions. They seem cold. Comedy calls for quick and breezy action, which eventually relieves a girl of self-consciousness and gives

her spontaneity of expression. Consult the list of popular stars today and you will find that the majority started in two-reel comedies -- Gloria Swanson, Bebe Daniels, Betty Compson, Priscilla Dean, Marie Prevost and even Pola Negri, I'm told.

* from *Movie Weekly*, April 15, 1922

IX. Inside the Studio

Since my last chat on "Getting a Job," I've had several letters asking what I thought about popularity contests which are conducted at various times by magazines and newspapers for the purposes of discovering girls with picture possibilities.

My answer is -- it all depends on the sort of contest it is, the people conducting it and the promises made.

Several reputable magazines and newspapers have been conducting contests which positively guarantee that the winner will have chance to make good in pictures. They have made arrangements with some producer to engage the winner.

Several girls now in pictures have found their opportunity through such contests. I believe Virginia Faire, who appeared in Kipling's "Without Benefit of Clergy," found entree through a beauty contest conducted by a well-known motion picture magazine. The beautiful Lucile Carlisle, who has been leading lady for Larry Semon for some time, also obtained her first position through a motion picture magazine contest. The Universal company, I believe, recently engaged several very attractive girls who won newspaper contests.

By all means, submit your pictures in these contests -- providing they are conducted by reliable magazines or newspapers or have the endorsement of well-known producers. But beware of any advertised contest which requests that you send money. Good magazines and papers do not take any money whatsoever from contestants.

But don't be discouraged if you do not win a contest in which you have been entered. You may have personality or beauty which the photograph fails to indicate. Besides, only a very few girls out of a great number can win these contests. And in the event that you are one of the very few, do not be too optimistic. The contest has opened the door to you; it is up to you to walk in and make yourself necessary.

I have urged you in previous chats to prepare yourself for a screen career by studying character through books and life. I have also tried to tell you how to go about getting work at the studios.

The one thing you should know before entering the studio is makeup. While there is nothing occult about the knowledge of makeup there are fine points which are worth understanding from the outset. For five dollars you can get someone to teach you how to makeup, or you may find a girl who is willing to show you without any charge. At any rate, find someone who can tell you what you should use and instruct you in the rudiments of using it. Makeup is a thing which requires long study, for each person requires a different sort. There are many little tricks for enhancing the beauty of the eyes, the lips, the contour of the face, and also of taking out lines and blemishes that are not becoming. It is better to use too little makeup than too much at the outset. Study the girls around you and note what they use. They may not be right always, but they may give you ideas. Some studios have a makeup man who reviews the "extras" before they go into a scene, but he does not apply the makeup. He only tells you if it needs changing. As soon as you are given a part, even the smallest "bit," the director will scrutinize your makeup and make suggestions. Comply at once with what he tells you to do. He may not be right, but his advice certainly should be followed. Later, you can develop your own individual style out of the many suggestions and experiments.

Study yourself constantly. Spend as much time as necessary before the mirror trying different styles of makeup and hair dress until you strike a combination that seems effective. Just the manner of doing the hair often makes a tremendous difference.

Once inside the studio do your best to make friends with everyone, but don't be aggressive. Do not attempt to make advances to the director or leading players. They are busy and cannot give attention to the many extras around them. But be on hand to observe them and do whatever they ask of you. Among the extras you will have an opportunity of making many acquaintances of value.

Always be on the alert to learn all you can. Do not sit about gazing into space or silently chewing gum like a resident of the pastures. Too many extras do that. Keep out of other people's way, but keep your eyes on them. Instead of striving to be the observer of all who can be observed. Note the instruction which the director gives the leading players and their methods of work. Above all, note the instruction which he gives you -- you of the extras -- and comply as quickly and effectively as you can.

What causes a director to pick a player out of the mob to do a part?

First, it may be that she is the "type," that is, she looks as the director imagines a character would look.

Second, it may be that she has shown personality, that individual spark which distinguishes her from the rest and for which the producer is always in quest.

Third, she may have displayed such intelligence in responding to direction and in assuming the expressions which were desired that the director believes she has acting ability.

Here, then, are the qualities which you must endeavor to show in order to advance: Individuality, Good Appearance, Acting Ability.

You cannot at will become any particular "type," but you can study yourself and determine the type you really are. If you are tall, slender and have the Oriental cast of features and coloring you should carry the Oriental motif in your dress and makeup. If you are the young girl type, you should dress simply and have the unaffected manner that a young girl has. It may be difficult for you to decide the type that you are. Few people really know. Oftentimes a part may decide it for them, as the part Theda Bara played in "A Fool There Was" stamped her the vampire type.

It is possible for everyone, however, to pay attention to a director and achieve the effects which he desires. Only concentration, imagination and earnestness are needed.

You do not need to shove yourself into the foreground in order to attract a director's attention. He is more liable to be attracted to you if you have shown care in dress and makeup and alertness in understanding the points which he has sought to convey.

Above all, I repeat again, show the best that is in you to everyone all the time. Don't start smiling and being nice just when the director glances your way. Be friendly to everyone -- not flirtatious -- friendly, I say. Don't preen or pose, be natural and unassuming. Be yourself. Act toward others as you would have them act toward you. Make friends.

After all, what is the great secret of popular success? Only this -- making friends. If you cannot make friends in the studio, you cannot make friends with the public. The mean, selfish, ill-tempered star famous for her "temperament," seldom wins the public. She may attract attention for a time if she has sufficient beauty and acting ability, but she will not gain the affection which will make her a lasting favorite.

In our final chat I'm going to talk of the most important thing of all -- Making Good.

* from *Movie Weekly*, April 22, 1922

X. Making Good.

I think the hardest time in an actress' career is when she begins to show signs of making good.

A little success is a dangerous thing, as some great writer has said.

At the first signs of it people begin to rally around the successful one. They pay complements, some merited and some fulsome. They almost rush the young "discovery" off her feet. She may be a perfectly sane young girl, but even so she cannot help but believe some of the nice things that are said. Perhaps she has shown ability and personality in a "bit." The critics have given her attention. The director and her fellow players may have congratulated her. The boys and girls of the extra class suddenly show her more friendly attention than they did a short time previous. She moves in a rarefied ether of congratulations.

Suddenly it occurs to her that she is an actress!

Well, my dear, just as that occurs to you, check yourself up and firmly say to yourself, "Why, you poor, struggling little infant, you have just learned to lisp your A. B. C.'s without falling down."

More of our stars should say that to themselves every day!

I promise you honestly that I say it to myself. You only may hope for yourself when you realize how little you know in comparison with greater artists.

I have seen a great many girls sniff a little of the incense of success and then quietly pass out -- too good to play "extras" and not well enough established to go on playing parts.

There's a curious idea in the film colony concerning caste.

Girls will tell you that you must never play a smaller part than the last one you played. You must never go backwards. Once a lead, always a lead -- or else a star.

Rubbish! If a private distinguishes himself in battle does he refuse to perform the menial tasks that are later required of him? Does a stenographer refuse to go on doing good typing because she has shown some promise of becoming a legal secretary by handling a difficult problem while her employer was away on his vacation?

Rewards are not always made instantly. Rudolph Valentino was not made a star immediately after he scored so beautifully in "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse." He has been quoted as saying that he was not even offered a job. He didn't consider himself superior to any sort of work. He accepted what was offered him, and proved over again that he had ability, that his success as *Julio* was not just an accident. Today he is a high-salaried star.

Never forget the ladder by which you climbed. Don't forget a single rung of it, or a single friend who helped you along. It is so easy to kick over that ladder.

Receive every step upward with gratitude and a determination to prove that the critics, the directors and your friends were not mistaken in you.

Real appreciation is the finest thing in the world. It helps the one who feels it quite as much as the one toward whom it is directed.

I know a girl who was fortunate enough to be cast in a leading role at the outset of her career. She played another leading part. After that she refused to do anything but "leads." A famous director offered her a "bit" in his picture. She considered it an affront. Well, that girl was idle for a great many weeks. She still is idle most of the time, but she is now grateful for "bits." She has ability, personality and beauty. I think she is a wonderful stellar bet, but she became "upstage" as we say in studio parlance, and directors would not consider her. They realized what she did not -- that she had a great deal to learn before she was worthy of becoming a genuine actress.

The worst enemies an actress has when she begins gaining fame are her well-meaning but flattering friends. They talk to her about herself and what she should and should not do until she becomes a hopelessly self-centered and egotistical young person. Oh, she doesn't realize it, unless she has a clear young head. She may never realize it until she finds herself again in that line outside the casting director's window.

When a director has praised you for the work you have given, thank him with sincerity. When a star pays attention to you and offers you advice or praise, thank him or her. When a critic calls attention to you and declares you have ability, take the trouble of expressing appreciation to him by a note. Never forget to be grateful. Remember that no one in the world ever accomplishes anything alone. There are always those who lend a helping hand, and for them you should be humbly grateful.

As I have said, character is essential in one who is to become a real favorite. And success is the most fearful test of that character.

Peruse the records of stardom and consider those who have continually progressed and those who have gone far and then sank into oblivion. You will find very few that have continued upward. Mary Pickford, yes. Lillian Gish, Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Nazimova, the Talmadges and a few others. They have not let down in the presence of wealth and fame. They have the character that keeps them working onward and upward. They have kept the faith with the public that has given them the fame and the wealth.

You may not know it, but the reputation which you gain around the studio soon creeps out and plays a big part in your public reputation. The motion picture is a collaborative work, and unless the carpenters, the prop boys, the wardrobe women, the electricians, the director and the other players are with you and for you there is a chance of your downfall.

"She's a sweet and charming girl, always willing to co-operate and always democratic." That is what I heard someone from a studio say about Betty Compson.

What a tribute! It impressed me. I was glad to know that she was liked, because one always likes to know that an actress whom she admires is really charming. When you have your co-workers loving you, there is hope that the world without may love you. And I have observed that those who are the most beloved by their employees or co-workers are the most beloved by the fans.

After all we have said, it comes back to the old theme of character. A great and fine human being is bound to be loved whether he is an actor, a statesman or a grocer. He may not pile up a great fortune, but he earns success.

Cultivate in yourself the finest and the noblest qualities, those which your own soul you most admire. Learn to be a fine, generous woman, capable of making real friends. Be true to yourself and to others. Develop all the gifts with which you have been endowed -- and I assure you they are legion. Then --

*"Give to the world the best you have
And the best will return to you."*

Your sincere and ever-grateful friend.

Mabel Normand.

APPENDIX B

CONTEMPORARY BIOGRAPHIES AND REMINISCENCES

*Quite a number of mini-biographies appeared during the course of Mabel's lifetime, most often as publicity or press information. After 1924, however, they tended to be presented more in the way of championing her in light of the bad press and scandals, or as combined encomiums and apologies lamenting her unmerited bad fortune. These articles and series are not only a useful as sources of accurate information, but their errors are sometimes valuable as well, giving us a clue as to the origin of later misstatements about Mabel's life: relating to such things as the site of her birth, or her background prior to going into films. A number of the inaccuracies which appear in Sennett's *King of Comedy*, for example, such as the purported European trip during Mabel's Goldwyn period were taken from some of these pieces.*

Almost instantaneous with its taking place, the Dines shooting seems to have been generally viewed as the death knell of Mabel's career. As a result, Mabel biographies after that date began to take on a tearful tone, as well as being accompanied by an often eloquent decrying of the injustice done her. In the first year of the Taylor case, there had been some of this on the part of a few of Mabel's defenders, such as Truman B. Handy. But it was ostensibly the Dines case that seems to have signaled this general trend.

After Adela Rogers St. Johns, with her moving, yet down-to-earth, Photoplay tributes, and devoted Herbert Howe, one of the best of Mabel's elegiac eulogists was veteran Sennett writer and publicity man, Harry Carr, as seen in the September-October 1929 biography, "The Tragic Life Story of Mabel Normand." Yet as much as Carr's personal sentiments express can be taken as sincere and quite his own, it is very conceivable that it was Sennett who prompted him to write it. That Sennett apparently had the decades old article still in his possession when he was working on his own autobiography many years later, perhaps suggests that it was one of his "properties." The 1924 Julia Harpman piece (which Carr also seems to have drawn upon in writing his own series) may also have originated with Sennett; the only presently known original newspaper paper copy of it, incidentally, being found in the Mack Sennett papers.

No doubt the most valuable material contained in all the contemporary chronicles of her life are Mabel's own autobiographical recountings. The first known of these, interestingly enough, came out in 1918, when she was still not yet 27 years of age. In addition to invaluable factual information, we glimpse in them her expression of what she thought mattered most, and also what she was most sensitive to. Though she may occasionally say something in a given instance that is mistaken, or even willfully untrue (assuming, of course, they are actually her own statements to begin with), we, nevertheless, are better situated to learn something of interest about the kind of person she was. At the same time, most of her memories can be considered for the most part reliable, since much of what she says be verified elsewhere. In those instances where it cannot be so corroborated, what she says makes for a perfectly plausible explanation of what we are not otherwise in a position to know.

*Fortunately and in addition to all this, journalist Sidney Sutherland interviewed Mabel extensively in 1927. This was done initially with a focus on the Taylor case, and the result was "The Mystery of the Movie Director," which appeared in *Liberty Magazine*, February 9, 1929. Then, shortly after Mabel's death, Sutherland's story of her life taken from her reminiscences was published. Some of the narration, however, seems to have come from earlier published interviews she gave with other journalist; which he then evidently interspersed with his own. It is this "autobiographical" story of her life that became the primary printed source of Betty Fussell's Mabel.*

* from *Motography*, April 19, 1913

Mabel Normand is all that the leading lady of the busy motion picture company is supposed to be and a good bit more. For besides being pretty and a real decoration to whatever picture she plays in she is also athletic and daring and provides the spectators of the silent comedy many a thrill in her performances. As a swimmer, she has scored her biggest successes, this accomplishment being her best beloved and best performed. The Vitagraph company gave Miss Normand her initial lessons in the art of picture acting and her extensive work there gave herself and others promise of great future development. Then she found her way to the Biograph studio where she climbed up and onward and graduated from there to the position of leading lady with the Keystone company. They like her, do the people, and Miss Normand reciprocates by continuing to please, for she likes being liked.

* from *The New York Clipper*, May 3, 1913

Mabel Normand, the beautiful and vivacious leading lady of the well known Keystone Co., is a girl of versatility and many accomplishments. Miss Normand, before entering the pictures, was recognized as one of the world's famous women swimmers. She has several medals and silver cups, presented to her for her prowess in the water. She is a graceful and daring high diver and has had several tempting offers to appear in vaudeville in a swimming specialty. Miss Normand is also an accomplished horse woman, all of which is solemnly asserted by the veracious young man, presiding over the destinies of the publicity forum of the Keystone Co.

* from *Motion Picture Magazine*, October 1914

Mabel Normand, of the Keystone Comedies was born in Boston, Mass.,²²⁶ of one of the most aristocratic New England families, her maternal grandfather being Governor of Massachusetts. Miss Normand attended a convent in Boston, and leaving school, joined the Vitagraph Company, later joining the ranks of the Biograph Company, about three years ago. She played for several seasons both in New York City and in Los Angeles. When the Keystone Company was organize, none other than the charming Mabel Normand was secured as leading woman. She is handsome, full of vivacity, beautifully formed, and is noted for her pretty pout and graceful figure.

²²⁶ This article is one of the very first, if not the first, of background biographies about Mabel which perpetrated many subsequent errors about her life. Here, for example, it says she was born in Boston, was granddaughter to a governor and attended a convent school, all of which are, of course, pure fabrications.

* from *Motography*, December 8, 1917

Mabel Normand, star in Goldwyn Pictures, served a long apprenticeship in screen work before graduating into the field of high comedy. Born in Atlanta, Ga., she came to New York with the determination to study art. Pending success in this line, she supported herself as an artist's model, her beauty and charm making her in great demand at the studios of the metropolis. So, in a sense, she began posing for pictures before she knew that pictures were to constitute her life's work.

In due course of time she made an excursion into musical comedy as a chorus girl. This brief experience was enough to awaken her histrionic ability, and soon after she applied to the Vitagraph studio to begin work in the films. Again her beauty and vivacity stood her in good stead and she was given an engagement at once.

This engagement lasted through a number of productions and then Miss Normand joined the Biograph working there under direction of D. W. Griffith. Her best remembered photoplay of those days is "The Diving Girl."

Mack Sennett was a member of the same company there; and when he organized a company to make plays for the New York Motion Picture Corporation, he took Miss Normand with him to Edendale, California.

* from *New York Morning Telegraph*, November 24, 1918

Mabel Normand Tells How She Entered Films

by Mabel Normand.

Indirectly it was the death of P. F. Collier, owner of Collier's Weekly, that led to my first work in pictures. At that time I was posing for James Montgomery Flagg, Charles Dana Gibson, and the Leyendeckers, also for Henry Hutt. One day I went to Mr. Gibson's studio in Carnegie Hall -- and better believe me it was a sad day for anybody who was late -- he let me go because Mr. Collier had just died and he had to go down to the office of Collier's Weekly to settle up some business. So I went down to the Fashion Camera-Eddow's studio that was down over Hudnuts on Broadway. Several of us used to go there and make \$5 a pose for being photographed in a hat or a cloak or a lace collar or something like that.

On that particular day I ran into Alice Joyce. She was then working at the Kalem studio on Twenty-Third street, but she still had the habit of running into Eddow's at lunch time to see the rest of us. She tried to get me over to the Biograph, where D. W. Griffith was working at that time. I didn't want to go at first. I was fairly satisfied with my \$3 a day for posing with an occasional extra \$5 or \$10 at the Fashion Camera studio. Besides, I wanted to be an illustrator. I could draw a little and I kept my eyes and ears open to pick up everything I could in the artist's studios.

But the next day Mr. Gibson had to be at Collier's office again, so I had a free day. I met Alice Joyce again, and the result was I went over to the Biograph studio. Griffith put me to work at once. I forget the name of the picture, but Florence Lawrence and Marion Leonard and Dell Henderson and Henry Walthall were the principals. They gave me a pair of tights and a page's costume which terrified me almost out of my wits. I had never worn tights before and it seemed to me that everybody around the place had nothing to do but stare at my legs. What was more, they kept me there until 12:30 and I didn't get home to Staten Island until nearly 2. So I did not get back next day and they were furious. I met Mack Sennett on the street a few days later and he said: "That was a terrible thing you did to Griffith not going back." I didn't understand that I was to be in another scene or what it meant.

But eventually Griffith sent for me and I worked regularly for the Biograph until they went to the Coast for the Winter. Then I went to the Vitagraph and got \$20 a week, working with John Bunny, Flora Finch, Ralph Ince and others. I remember Anita Stewart was an extra girl at that time.

When Griffith came back from the Coast I went to the Biograph studio again. They would not allow our names to be published in those days. I was known as the little dark haired Biograph girl. Nearly all the other girls on the screen at that time were blondes. Mary Pickford was with Biograph then, and Charley West and Dell Henderson.

I had always been fond of swimming and diving for my own amusement and one of the most popular pictures I played in was "The Diving Girl," which Griffith made.

When Mack Sennett first came to me and said: "How would you like to make \$100 a week?" I said, "Stop making fun of me -- don't be ridiculous." And when he took me to Kessell and Bauman[n] they said, they liked my looks. I asked if they intended to pay me \$100 a week and they said, "Well, call it \$125."

You may believe me or not, but when I got that contract in my hands I walked in a daze from Union Square to Times Square and back. Every five blocks I would read it again. I couldn't believe it. I took it to Alice Joyce in the Park Avenue Hotel and showed it to her. We both decided that it meant \$25 a week and that the figure 1 was a fake.

I worked at the Keystone with Mack Sennett for several years. Charlie Chaplin joined the company after a while. In fact I was responsible for his coming into pictures. I saw him one night at Hammerstein's Victoria and went straight out and telegraphed Sennett to get him.

I worked at the Keystone until they organized the Mabel Normand company. A little more than a year ago Samuel Goldfish made me an offer and I joined the Goldwyn organization. The first picture I made for Goldwyn was "Dodging a Million," directed by George Loane Tucker. I have since been in half a dozen others, including "Joan of Plattsburg," "Back to the Woods" and "The Venus Model." My newest comedy is "A Perfect 36," and I am to do "Sis Hopkins."

* from *Dramatic Mirror*, March 20, 1920

"Before They Were Stars: Mabel Normand

By An Old Timer

MABEL NORMAND (known as "the little dark haired Biograph girl" in the early days of pictures) came to New York from Atlanta, Georgia, with a definite career in view. No; not the pictures. They didn't rank very high at that time, but she felt she had the makings of a great artist and came to seek fame and fortune. Strange freaks that old Goddess plays! For she started Mabel on her career, and neglected to provide the necessary wherewithal for lessons, food and a few minor stepping-stones along the path to Fame.

So Mabel became a model and earned the vast sum of five dollars a day working for such well known artists as James Montgomery Flagg, Charles Dana Gibson, the Leyendeckers and Henry Hutt. Her beauty and freshness made her services very much in demand.

She says that the unusual has played a big part in her career. It has been the acceptance of opportunities on impulse that has helped her most. Indirectly it was the death of the late P.F. Collier, owner of *Collier's Weekly*, that led to her first picture work.

She was posing for Mr. Gibson at his studio in Carnegie Hall, and the death of Mr. Collier necessitated the closing of the studio so that Mr. Gibson could get down to the Weekly offices. She decided to go down to the Fashion Camera, where she often made an extra five spot for posing in a new gown or up-to-the-minute hat. Alice Joyce used to work here, but was posing for the Kalem and they had quite a talk about pictures on the day of her enforced holiday.

Alice Joyce told of an opening up at the old Biograph Studio and Mabel journeyed up on the Third Avenue "L" and took the long walk across town wondering if she had not been foolish to yield to this unexpected opportunity.

D. W. Griffith happened to be on the stage and recognized in the new extra girl, a genuine "find." The first posing was in doublet and hose as a page in an historic one reeler. Miss Normand has forgotten the name but Florence Lawrence played the lead, and Marion Leonard, Dell Henderson and Henry Walthall were in the cast.

The rehearsals lasted till almost midnight and Mabel went home tired out and determined that a picture career was not for her. In her ignorance she didn't know that she should have reported until released and had held up the picture, an awful thing in those days even as now! It was Mack Sennett who broke the news to her when he met her by chance a few days later and she went back to the studio to apologize, never expecting that she would have more work for the Biograph.

But she was kept busy at the magnificent sum of twenty-five dollars a week until the company went West. She was not of enough importance then to be taken along, but important enough to secure other work at the Vitagraph and appeared with John Bunny, Flora Finch, Ralph Ince and others of the old timers. Then came another bit of luck.

Mack Sennett, on his return from the Coast, hunted up the little girl who had done such good work in his comedies and offered her a contract at \$125 a week -- a big sum in those days and so big that Miss Normand says she decided that there must be some mistake and that the contract was probably for \$25 and the extra figure a slip of the pen! Mack Sennett must be making a joke of her and she fully expected to wake up and find that she had dreamed it all! Such was her idea of her own ability at a time when the work of "the little dark haired girl" was greatly discussed in all quarters. Perhaps that is one of the secrets of her success, for the same modesty exists today and she has little to say of her own importance and much to tell of what others in the profession have accomplished.

A well known exhibitor declared not long ago that it was too bad that Mabel Normand had gone in for comedy, that her dramatic powers were second to none, and that she could give a lot of the other stars a good run for their money. Other exhibitors will agree that "Mabel Normand nights" are "standing-room-only" ones, and that few stars are possessed of so many admirers among screen fans.

It was a queer twist of fate again, that made her a comedienne instead of a dramatic star. Mack Sennett is undoubtedly to blame, and yet who would do otherwise? The little dark haired girl who was assigned to play bits in his comedies did so well that she was soon promoted to leading lady. Why should he pass his "find" over to play dramatic roles when she had been discovered by him?

Surely we all remember those old time comedies when pie slinging was the favorite indoor sport. The burlesque appealed and comedies that did not have plenty of pie throwing were considered not at all worth while. Mabel Normand played a lot of such roles and learned to be an adept at hitting the mark and dodging at just the psychological moment.

A reissue of some of those "funny" pictures would perhaps fall as flat as the property pies. The public has outgrown that sort of humor, but it has not outgrown its admiration for Mabel -- pies or no pies. She has learned a lot of new arts to keep up with the modern high class comedies and learned them well -- riding, swimming, shooting and a dozen other things.

She uses fewer "doubles" than anyone else in the game. If she was not so anxious to do her own "stunts" she would not have had the accidents from time to time that have laid her up. Accident insurance companies do not like to insure picture people; some of them do -- under protest -- but no one in the world would take Mabel as a risk. One of her worst mixups was the time that she played the part of a long suffering heroine of one of Mack Sennett's comedies out on the Coast. Among the other "cute" things that was devised for her was to be tied to a rock in the ocean and let the tide come in.

The villain still pursued her and so did the water which came in huge waves over the rock and drenched Mabel to the skin. The audiences were particularly enthusiastic over this picture and did not know Miss Normand not only caught a terrible cold, barely escaping pneumonia, but broke her perfectly good arm during the realistic progress of the play. Even then she didn't think of herself but was glad that the last scene had been taken out so that she could rest a few weeks in peace. Mabel is a thoroughly good sport -- as her many friends will testify.

Though she will not express an opinion, it must be a relief to be away from those Keystone days when one's life was in the balance during the making of every picture. All sorts of realistic perils were portrayed and one had to be absolutely devoid of fear to go through with the rehearsals. But it was excellent training, as the development of those who made their start in comedy will testify.

The new style of pictures for Goldwyn has added more friends for the little star. People who did not care for comedies, and to whom the name Mabel Normand was practically unknown, have raved over "The Jinx" and "Pinto." Her moments of emotional acting make one forget the hoyden and realize that a really great dramatic actress has been lost in the fun loving little heroine.

Some day someone will take a chance and present her in a series of features along an entirely different line, and they will succeed. Perhaps this is a future plan of the Goldwyns. The transition from farce comedy to high class drama is too sudden to be accomplished in a hurry. These fine comedy drama may be just the connecting link.

Mabel Normand is in a class by herself. Her name suggests no other screen actress for no other is doing the sorts of plays that she is. While there are many ingenues, many vampires, many character actresses, she has no competitors in her particular sort of plays.

There has been no mention of her future appearance on the stage but undoubtedly she would be an excellent bet. Many stars are contemplating a dip into stage work now that so many of their number have made hits on Broadway, and Miss Normand, with her good speaking voice, excellent presence and charming personality (not to forget her good looks!), might easily fall in line.

Her work in "When Doctors Disagree" a recent Goldwyn, shows cleverness as a pantomimist. She cold creams her face -- giving it a clown like effect and makes those shapely arms look long and badly proportioned. She is an awkward country girl and just as in "Pinto" she wears her clothes without grace and then is transformed into a society butterfly with clothes of the latest pattern. There are moments of pathos in both pictures and she switches from fun to sadness in the twinkle of an eye. She is never at a loss and her personality dominates every scene.

A Westerner by adoption she revels in that wonderful California weather and doesn't have time to get to New York often. The Coast colony have plenty of good times to amuse them and do not find New York indispensable. A far cry to stardom from Atlanta, Georgia, to Los Angeles, and from art school to a picture studio. Yet every step of they way has been built up by hard work and the keenness to recognize opportunity and the willingness to work hard and faithfully.

So many dream of careers with no hard places along the way. The minor details do no appeal to them and they are over anxious to get to the top. How many would-be stars, failing to progress, would bide their time and take what presented itself? Many of those who talk longest and loudest about the injustice of the film business and the unwillingness of directors to give newcomers a start would not be willing to work as hard as a lot of those who have made names for themselves.

Mabel Normand, realizing that she had not the money to accomplish her first ambition did not rave about the injustice of life but got some work that would keep her eating regularly and was on the alert for an opportunity to succeed. From posing -- and the work is not easy -- she stepped into extra work (and that is not easy either) and when that ceased, look about for another place. She had youth and good looks, two essentials, but the pluck and hard work helped a lot, too.

If Charles Ray's story last week read like a sort of Horatio Alger book, Mabel Normand's is a fairy tale. The old time fairy tales had more behind them than appeared on the surface. Fairy gifts were freely bestowed but the wise wand wielders knew the right persons to elect to fame and fortune. You remember that the lazy were never rewarded while the good and the industrious came out ahead every time. It makes one tired to hear that "Luck" is responsible for success in the world. Not a word of truth in it. Maybe it helps a little but ask anyone who has GOT THERE and they will tell you a lot about the hard knocks on the way. If they haven't had any, take some of the things they tell you with a grain of salt!

One of the biggest newspaper editors in town and said one day that he had just met a remarkable woman. She had never had a rejected manuscript in her life! And he put her down for just what she was -- a bluff. There are many bluffs in the picture game and they tell all kinds of stories, particularly to interviewers. Mabel Normand is not that kind. Her simplicity and lack of conceit are two real marks of greatness, and to quote the words of a foreign admirer at a recent Goldwyn showing where Mabel was monarch of all she surveyed, "VIVA MABEL!"

* from *Los Angeles Herald*, November 18, 1919

(excerpt from) **Interview In Jazz With 'Fun Girl' Of Films** ²²⁷

By Ray W. Frohman

... "I've been in pictures five years. I used to pose for illustrators in New York, principally James Montgomery Flagg and Charles Dana Gibson. You'd get \$1.50 for the morning and \$1.50 for the afternoon.

"Haven't you seen those Gibson drawings of the girl with a chain and pearl pendant around her neck? He had a contract for drawing covers for one big magazine and double pages for another. I was the model.

"Then one of the heads of the magazine publishing firm died, and when Mr. Gibson gave me a vacation, I met Alice Joyce in the street. She's seen me posing, too, but had left that for the Kalem company, where she was getting \$5 a day as an 'extra.'

"She knew people at the Biograph studio, and she and Frank Lanning, the Indian character actor, who'd worked for both Kalem and Biograph, told me I ought to get a job with Biograph.

"I wanted to go down there for the experience, as I had time off from Mr. Gibson -- though I'd report each morning at his studio in Carnegie hall, on Fifty-seventh street.

"Mr. Griffith was taking a picture when I got to the studio. I waited around. I met him, and he put me to work -- at \$5 a day.

"Then they moved Biograph to the West for the winter, and I went to Vitagraph. I did a 'Betty' series of comedies there with John Bunny, Flora Finch and others and some dramas, too. Lillian Walker, Anita Stewart and Constance Talmadge were there -- also as extras.

"When Biograph returned to New York I went back to it, making "The Mender of Nets" with Mary Pickford and a drama with Bobby Harron. During some of the two-reel comedies I was in at Biograph, Mack Sennett was the director -- and played in them as well.

"All this covered about a year and a half. About this time the 'independents' were getting strong, including Bauman[n] and Kessel, part owner of Keystone and K. B. and Bronco comedies. Mack Sennett offered me \$100 a week to star with them. He was to get the job of director if he could get me.

"I didn't think I'd ever be worth it! A hundred a week! I couldn't believe it even after I'd signed the contract!

"Then all of them -- Ince, Sennett, Griffith, Bauman and Kessel and Harry Aikin -- formed the Triangle, and I went with them. I was still under their management when I made 'Mickey' -- but I went to a separate studio and it was made as a separate release.

"Not just 'comedies' -- 'comedy dramas' you'd call 'em -- those I made at Keystone studio. Owen Moore and Lew Cody were there then, too. I was already starring there when Fatty Arbuckle got a job with the Sennett company as a cop!"

Mabel said that she was already starring at Keystone when my approachable young friend, Charlie Chaplin, came there too. She continued:

²²⁷ See remainder of this article at *Los Angeles Herald*, Nov. 18, 1919 in earlier part of this book.

“‘Mickey,’ made in 1918, was, of course, my first BIG picture. Then I went to Kansas City and signed with Goldwyn to star in comedy dramas -- a long series of them, including ‘Joan of Plattsburg; and ‘The Pest,’ the latter written by Melville W. Brown, now manager of Al St. John. One, ‘Dodging a Million,’ was directed by George LoaneTucker -- and he’s a great director.”....

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\* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 17, 1924

**Mabel Normand’s Own Life Story! -- Chapter 1**

by Mabel Normand as told to Chandler Sprague

**Filmland’s Greatest Comedienne Writes of Her Striking Career**

Writing the story of one’s life is a perfectly awful thing.

I don’t like that way of phrasing it, anyhow. It sounds like I was Methuselah’s daughter or some one who had been around this little old world so long that I was about to give the universe the benefit of my vast span of years.

And I’ve just begun to live.

So let’s call it “a few chapters from my life,” and if it will be of interest, I shall be glad. Doubtless there are lessons and morals to be drawn from the lives of all of us. If there is one in mine, I hope it will be of service, not only to you but to me. But I guess we all find it a whole lot easier to point a moral from the errors of some one else, than to profit by our own mistakes.

The Examiner has asked me, before I begin my own story to answer two questions. And they are:

1--Would I advise a young girl to seek a career in motion pictures?

2--And to one who is seeking a career, what is the best road to success?

There it is again, the advice from grandma! Like most professional persons who have passed 18 years (actual), I am a perfect clam about my age. If you have any idea that I am going to step right out here, in print, with a chatty discussion about the year I was born, you may as well turn the page. I prefer to leave such uninteresting details to my girl friends.

But I’m going to try to answer the questions. And to the first one, my answer is “Yes.” I respectfully decline to make the stereotyped reply that this question often elicits from actors and actresses. “No, no, my dear, you mustn’t think of such a thing. The hardships we professional people have to undergo, the tremendous amount of talent necessary for success, you’ve no idea.” And all this with unutterable lifting of the eyebrows and an air of boredom and disillusionment with all things theatrical.

I think it’s a wonderful life. It’s hard work, of course, just as it requires hard work to succeed in any other career we may choose. And perhaps it’s overcrowded, as they say. But there’s always room at the top, according to a good old axiom of the stage.

And if you have confidence in yourself, if you think you have talent for motion picture work, then I certainly would not be one to discourage you. You must be prepared for many disappointments and for progress that seems tremendously slow. Perhaps you won’t succeed at all. In fact, you probably won’t. But you’ll have tried. And that’s something. I’d rather have a try at what I feel I can do and what I want to do, even if I fail, than to drudge along at something that doesn’t interest me, simply because I’m doubtful if I have the courage to stand adversity.

If you think you have talent for the work, go to it, my child (grandma speaking again). You’ll find a lot of people to give you a helping hand over the rough spots. Some of the very finest men and women I’ve ever met are motion picture actors and actresses. I’d like to stack up their lives, with the good deeds I happen to know they have done, against the lives of some others who are inclined, perhaps, to gaze down upon them from a self-erected eminence.

And to the second question, “What is the road to success?” There is only one answer--work. Work and study, until you have learned the technique of the screen. Contrary to popular opinion, it can’t be acquired in a day. And it can’t be acquired by running for the dressing room the minute your “bit” is finished. Those whom I have seen climb from mediocrity to stardom have made it a practice to watch their fellow workers, to pick up a mannerism here and a little trick there, to think about them at home and to figure out what made them impressive. That’s the way to learn. And to learn is to be successful.

There is no other way in my opinion. You have heard a great deal of talk doubtless, about favoritism and luck being big factors in screen success. Miss Soandso, they tell you, is a star because she happened to be in a picture that was an unexpected hit or because the producer favors her more than other actresses. Don’t you believe it. It’s the public that makes the stars, in motion pictures. And if the dear old public doesn’t like them, they don’t become stars, permanently. There may be an element of luck, or of favoritism, in getting a chance to show what one can do. But you must be ready for your chance. You must be prepared, by hard work, to accept the opportunity and ride it to success. Luck or favoritism may be able to make a star, but they can’t keep her one. It’s the public that does that.

I hope I have answered the questions. I’ve done the best I know how.

And, after all, answers to questions like those are matters of personal opinion. So, with those few words, I will plunge into my own story, the telling of which will be much easier than trying to hand forth a lot of “highbrow” advice.

Up to the time I left school there was nothing eventful or particularly interesting in my life. My mother lived on Staten Island and I attended school, the last few years, at North Westport, Mass., near Martha’s Vineyard. Once a month I went home, in charge of a stewardess on the Fall River Line, but I stayed at school, during the summer, studying hard and trying to skip a class and get ahead faster. I was tremendously ambitious in those days. We had very little money and even my occasional trips home were a great expense.

I wanted to finish as soon as I could, so I could learn more about the things that particularly interested me. I was crazy about music and drawing. I wanted to be a big musician. And I’ve never really lost that desire. Even up to last year I used to practice six or seven hours a day at the piano, when I could possibly get the time to do so.

But I didn’t get ahead as fast as either my mother or myself hoped I would. Lack of money for proper instruction handicapped me, and when a friend of ours, who was also a friend of Hamilton King, the artist, suggested that I could earn money posing for him, mother finally agreed. I stopped school at Martha’s Vineyard, came home to

Staten Island and went to work for Mr. King, continuing my studies in drawing and music at night. This was when I was 14 years old.

I became a member of the Art Students' League, where it is possible to get competent instruction at night at a nominal cost, and I spent all day posing, at first for Mr. King and then for other artists and illustrators.

Most of the work I did was to pose for heads for magazine covers. And I didn't like it. I hated to stand still. I hated to be simply a means by which someone else was creating something. I wanted to do it myself, but I couldn't. I had only the longing, without the ability.

I received \$1.50 in the morning and the same amount in the afternoon for posing. Thirty cents of that went for carfare and ferry fare and I had to spend a little money for lunch. Sometimes, however, I didn't get any lunch. I used my lunch hour instead to pose for a commercial photographer. Wearing a hat or a dress that he wanted to photograph, we models would stand around in front of the camera during the noon hour and he would sell the pictures to trade journals.

It was there that I met Alice Joyce and Anna Q. Nilsson, who were taking the same means of earning a little extra money. Neither of them, at that time, had been in motion pictures. And so I kept on with the artists and they said I was a good model, easy to draw and adaptable to the costumes in which they portrayed their magazine-cover heroines. Among the artists and illustrators for whom I posed during the next few months, in addition to Mr. King, were James Montgomery Flagg, Charles Dana Gibson, C. Coles Phillips, Henry Hutt, Orson Lowell, J. C. and F. X. Lydenhecker, Alonzo Kimball, Haskell Coffin and Penrhyn Stanlaws.

Gradually I acquired a vogue among artists as being a type that lent itself readily to diversified costuming. I found myself more in demand and finally was engaged, permanently, by two of the most prominent, Gibson and Flagg. I posed for Mr. Gibson every morning at his studio in Carnegie Hall and for Mr. Flagg in the afternoon at his Sixty-seventh street studio.

The arrangement was more satisfactory because I knew exactly what I had to do every day, but it didn't increase my wages. I was still getting \$3.00 per day, \$1.50 from each artist.

I thought it was a lot, however. And it helped. I was able to pay more for my music lessons and thus get better teachers. And I was happy in the opportunities that were afforded me to watch these masters as they worked. When I became tired they permitted me, sometimes, to stand behind them and watch their brush as they retouched and filled in face and figure. It was something I couldn't have bought and I realized its value.

There were periods of unhappiness, however. As I look back at them now I believe they came from the ambitions that always were tormenting me. Mr. Gibson had a number of evening gowns that he used as costumes for his models. They had been given to him by society women of his acquaintance for that purpose and every time I put on one of them it took the place, for me, of Aladdin's lamp. They were very smart, these gowns, made in Paris, most of them, and I used to imagine myself the original owner, trailing these wonderful creations through gorgeous reception rooms and across the floors of glittering ballrooms.

I wondered what it would be like to have a wardrobe that would permit giving away clothes like those I was wearing and I used to visualize the parties at which they had been worn, giving myself all the airs and graces that I felt I would have put on and smiling condescendingly at multitudes of suitors in evening clothes with ribbons across their shirt fronts. Very distinguished were all the men of my dream parties, with iron gray hair and manners that included bowing from the waist and much courtly kissing of the hand.

Those days and those dreams left an ineffaceable impression on me. Of late years, since fortune has been more kind, I have been able, occasionally, to give away a dress or a hat. And every time I do it, I get a thrill. The image of me as I was at 14 pops up before my eyes and I realize that no Paris gown, no wonderful hat can ever mean as much to me as did those cast-off things in which I used to flaunt myself before the mirror at Mr. Gibson's studio. Some day someone is going to portray, on paper or on the stage or screen, the nebulous dreams and longings that come to an adolescent girl, poised with diffident foot on the threshold of a broader life. If it is ever done truly it will be a wonderful masterpiece. But it will require, in the doing, a very great artist.

All this happened before I ever thought of motion pictures. I used to go to see them, with mother, and I was an ardent "fan," even then. I had my favorites on the screen and D. W. Griffith was my favorite director. In the next installment of this story I want to tell about my first venture in pictures as an extra girl, with the Kalem Company, and of how I first met Mr. Griffith, whose pupil I became and for whose ability and artistry I shall always hold a very great reverence.

\* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 24, 1924

**Mabel Normand's Own Life Story -- Chapter 2**

**"Thrice I Turned my Back on Film Career," Says Star**

You never know your luck!

This isn't a very original statement. Something seems to tell me it has been said before, but it illustrates, almost exactly, how I tried to turn my back on what was waiting for me. Three times I tried my foolish best to walk away from motion pictures, and all three times chance intervened and set my feet back on the path illuminated by the Klieg lights. It happened like this:

Last week I wrote of the days when I was posing at the studios of Mr. Gibson and Mr. Flagg, and augmenting my slender wages by parading during the noon hour before a fashion camera. It was there that I met Alice Joyce, and it was to her that I owed my first chance in motion pictures.

I met her on the street one day, and mentioned that she had not been at the commercial photographer's for some time.

"No, I'm in moving pictures now," she said. "I'm leading lady for the Kalem Company. We're working tonight. Why don't you come up and see how motion pictures are made? It's very interesting."

I was on my way to Mr. Flagg's studio, but I went with Alice to a drug store and phoned my mother, telling her of Alice's invitation. Mother always has adored Alice Joyce, and she told me to go ahead. So after I finished posing I went to the address Alice had given me, and the first surprise I got was to find that the studio was in an office building. I've forgotten exactly where the Kalem Company was located then, but I think it was either Thirty-third or Forty-second street, and I remember it was in a great, big office building.

They were taking a scene when I went in. I asked for Miss Joyce, but she was acting before the camera. George Melford, who is now with Lasky, was directing, and I was intensely interested in all I saw as I stood there waiting for Alice to finish. I didn't stay very long because I wanted to get to the Staten Island ferry before it got too late, but while I was talking to

Alice the assistant director was issuing a call for "extras" to work the next day on location. Seeing me talking to Miss Joyce he came over and asked me if I would like to work. It happened that I was to have a few days' vacation from posing, and I told him I would like to try it. I was directed to be there at 8 o'clock the next morning to start for Fort Lee, New Jersey. I worked three days in that picture, and I never shall forget it. It was a Puritan picture, and was taken in the dead of winter. They gave us little thin gray dresses to wear and I almost froze to death. The Puritans must have had a terrible time. I gathered that their entire existence was spent in running away from Indians. We ran downhill, and then they would turn us around and have us run uphill. And all the time with a gang of large, whooping Indians in close pursuit.

"Run," yelled the director, and we ran. "Stop," and we stopped.

At first it was all very interesting, and I was filled with shivering enthusiasm. But after a while all the enthusiasm froze up and I concluded that motion pictures would be a wonderful career for an Eskimo lady, but wasn't quite suited for me. I stuck it out for three days, but finally had to admit defeat at the hands of the thermometer. I was supposed to go back to work, anyhow, at that time with Mr. Gibson and Mr. Flagg, so I dropped the motion pictures and I didn't care if I never saw an Indian again. Every time I passed a cigar store I shivered.

And there it might have ended; my "cuh-ree-hr," as the press agents call it. I might have come to naught, alackaday, but for chance or Fate, or whatever it is that intervenes and shapes our destinies. While I was scuffling around in the snow and trying to keep one jump ahead of Mr. Pontiac and all his relatives I had met Frank Lanning, a very famous actor of Indian characters. We had stood around between pursuits and talked of motion pictures and posing, and how different they were, to which I agreed with chattering teeth. And the next time I met Mr. Lanning it was at what might be called a psychological moment.

I had gone back to posing. I hadn't seen Alice Joyce for four months, and I had no idea of ever again attempting to work in motion pictures. But one morning Mr. Gibson told me he would be busy for some time in litigation that had arisen over a contract. He said he would pay me during the time I was loafing, but suggested that I try to get work with some other artist while I was waiting for him to be free to draw again.

It was just after this conversation and while I was debating what artist to ask for work that I met Frank Lanning on the street. He said he had noticed several things Mr. Gibson had drawn and had recognized me as the model. There was one head in particular that he seemed to admire and he told me that when he saw it on a magazine cover he had made up his mind to hunt me up some time and advise me to make another try at motion pictures.

"I am working for D. W. Griffith," he said, "and I'm on my way there now. Why don't you come along and let me introduce you to the casting director?"

If Mr. Gibson had not suspended work that day, I probably would have told Mr. Lanning that it was very nice of him to suggest it, but that I thought I'd better stick to posing. You see, I still had ambition to become an artist some day. But I went. He took me to the old Biograph studio, on Fourteenth street--the studio that made screen history. When we entered they were taking a scene and Mr. Lanning found he had only a few minutes to make up. So he hurried away, leaving me standing there.

The first thing I noticed was how green every one looked. In complexion, I mean. They must have had different lights at the Kalem company because I hadn't noticed it when I watched Alice, that night. I didn't think of the lights. I guess I thought it was part make-up and part natural complexion. And the next thing that caught my eye was a gorgeous creature who was working before the camera. It was Florence Lawrence. She had on a wonderful gown and her golden hair was almost sweeping the floor. With the peculiar tint cast on her face by the lights she was very beautiful.

I didn't know anything about wigs, then, and I thought it was her own hair.

I stood there watching her, and I shrank back in a corner, with an awed, "Gosh."

She looked like all seven of the Sutherland sisters, and I said to myself, as I watched her: "You don't belong here, Mabel. You haven't hair like that. Your eyes are only about half as big as hers are and your lips aren't as full and red as hers. You won't have a chance of making good alongside anyone like that. You'd better stick to posing."

So I began to edge toward the door. I watched Miss Lawrence and Henry Walthall for a few minutes longer. I saw a man directing then whom I presumed to be Mr. Griffith. I noticed that Mr. Lanning was busy. And I "ducked." For the second time I was running away from fame and fortune, as the story books call it.

But I didn't get far. I was half-way down the stairs when a voice hailed me from the top. "Just a minute, please," it said. And the owner of the voice descended. It was Wilfred Lucas, famous Broadway star, who was Mr. Griffith's right hand man. I had heard of him, but I had never seen him before.

"Would you mind waiting a moment," he said. "Mr. Griffith noticed you standing there and he would like to speak to you. Can you come back for a minute?"

So I climbed the stairs again, Mr. Lucas leading the way. And I have thought of those stairs often as epitomizing my life. I was going to D. W. Griffith. I was climbing. And I've tried, ever since, to keep on climbing. But the unkind knocks that Fate has dealt me have so depressed me mentally, at times, that I feel again as if I were, in spirit, descending those stairs, going away from Griffith, going away from everything that I prize in life, and waiting for the helping hand, the friendly encouragement that would buoy me up, turn me around and start me climbing again.

When we reached the studio Mr. Griffith was still busy, so we stood there and I told Mr. Lucas why I had become discouraged and started away. I pointed out Miss Lawrence's hair and eyes and told him I was afraid I didn't have the right complexion. "My hair doesn't come down to my feet," I said, and he chuckled. But he didn't undeceive me. He left me to find out all those things for myself. I knew I had pulled a faux pas of some kind, however, and I was extremely uncomfortable. Mr. Lucas had the carriage of the successful actor. It awed me and while he was very kind he couldn't put me at my ease. Many time since then we have laughed at our first meeting.

Whenever we see each other nowadays I call him "The Great Lucas," and he grins reminiscently.

For twenty-five minutes we stood there until Mr. Griffith finished and went to his desk in a corner of the studio. Then Mr. Lucas led me over. I shall never forget Mr. Griffith. Already he was one of the most important men in motion pictures, but he was as kind and simple in his talk with me as a man could possibly be. His voice charmed me, particularly. It had a timbre and a gentleness that encouraged me.

He asked me my name and if I had had any experience in motion picture work.

"No, sir," I answered.

"Then how did you happen to come here today?" he said.

So I told him that I had been posing for Mr. Gibson and Mr. Flagg, that I had met Alice Joyce and had fled from great gobs of Indians during three days with the Kalem company. That was where I had met Mr. Lanning, I told him, and that was how I happened to come to the Biograph studio.

He asked me if I would like to work with his company. I had noticed as I watched them all before the camera, how like a happy family they seemed. Every one was friendly with every one else, they all seemed to admire and respect Mr. Griffith, and I thought it would be nice to be with them. And, besides, Mr. Griffith could make any one ambitious. He was so kind-hearted that I believe if he were talking with someone who was absolutely impossible as an actress, he would make her feel that if she worked real hard, she would make good.

So I told him I would like to try it. I don't believe they took "tests" in those days. Or maybe they didn't want to waste any film on an "extra." Anyhow they didn't turn the camera on me but just told me to go downstairs and get dressed and made-up. This was early in the afternoon and I phoned Mr. Flagg that I couldn't come to pose for him that day and I started right in to work under Mr. Griffith.

And the first thing I discovered was that my dress would consist of doublet and tights. It was a costume picture and I was to be one of six pages, in a court scene. Mrs. Ada Ebling, the wardrobe woman, helped me into the costume. It was the first time I had ever worn tights and I was scared stiff and embarrassed almost to the point of tears. I guess she took pity on me because she gave me a long cloak, before she sent me upstairs. She told me to keep the cloak around me until it came time for me to go before the camera.

But I'm afraid this installment is getting to long. I guess this is a good place to stop. Next week I'll tell you how I got through my first real picture and how for the third time I abandoned the work, went back to posing and tried to run away from what life was holding out to me.

\* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, March 2, 1924

**Mabel Normand's Own Life Story -- Chapter 3**

**Film Star Tells How She Started as Tragedienne!**

"Please stand out there and stop hiding."

This was the first individual direction I received in motion pictures.

It was hurled at me by an assistant director for D. W. Griffith and it was the final touch necessary to complete one of the most thorough cases of camera fright in my experience.

As I told you last week, I had been engaged by Mr. Griffith as an extra in a costume picture. I was supposed to be a page and the costume consisted of doublet and tights. Wrapped in a cloak that had been lent me by the kind-hearted wardrobe woman, I had waited for some time the call for the pages to take their places. Then I dropped the cloak and stepped out to spend a very miserable hour.

There were six of us pages. We were to make a frame for the entrance of the leading actors, and then follow them out. I was supposed to stand near a post. But I stood behind it. Anything to get behind something. I thought everyone was looking at me. As a matter of fact, no one was paying the slightest attention to me, but I felt certain I was the focus of all eyes. Instead of feeling like one page, I felt like a whole book, with every leaf fluttering.

And it was because I persisted in trying to slip behind this post and in standing on one foot like a bashful pelican that the exasperated assistant director felt constrained to utter harsh words.

But I got used to it after a while and when we were told that we were to work that night and receive a "double check" I was glad. It meant \$10 instead of the usual five-dollar bill. I didn't think about my mother worrying.

But when I got home to Staten Island at 2 o'clock in the morning I thought about it, with emphasis. I got a scolding that made me realize how I had worried her. And it put an end to motion picture work, for me, for a considerable time. Without bothering to telephone the Biograph studio that I was not coming back, I just quit, and went back to posing for Mr. Flagg, Mr. Gibson and several other artists.

I never expected to face a movie camera again. But Fate must have decided otherwise. It was three months later that I met, in the Forty-second street subway station, Henry Walthall, Mack Sennett and Dell Henderson. They had been working for Mr. Griffith the day I had page-fright, and I had been introduced to them.

All three of them, when they encountered me in the subway station, put their hands on their hips and just stood still and looked at me.

Finally Mr. Sennett said:

"Where in the world do you live, young lady? We telephoned all over Brooklyn and Staten Island trying to locate you. Didn't you know that those pages were supposed to be in three or four scenes, that they came close to the camera and that because you didn't come back we had to re-take all that day's work that showed you in the page's costume?"

"I hope Mr. Griffith wasn't annoyed," I said.

"I fear he was annoyed, just a trifle annoyed," said Mr. Sennett, grinning at the others. "But why didn't you come back?"

And so I told them about how late I got home and how mother didn't like the hours and concluded I had better stick to posing. We stood there quite a while talking. And they bought me a malted milk shake, with an egg in it.

I remember that because I had been contemplating such a purchase myself, but I couldn't afford the egg. Anyhow, the upshot of the conversation was that they enthused me all over again with motion picture work. They said they would explain it to Mr. Griffith and told me to ask my mother if I couldn't come back to the studio.

I did and she consented finally. I went back to see Mr. Griffith and he didn't even mention the late unpleasantness, but gave me a job working as an extra girl at \$25 per week. Mother had made up her mind, I guess,

that I was slated for motion picture work. This was the third time I had tried to turn away from it and each time I had been brought back through an accident. So she gave in and accepted the inevitable.

And thus began my happiest days in pictures. Those old Biograph days! Will they ever be equaled, I wonder, for their effect on the industry and for the atmosphere that surrounded that little group? I doubt it.

Every once in a while, nowadays, I meet a member of the old company. And we talk about something that happened then. And we sigh.

"The old days," we say, in unison. "What wonderful times we had. What a lot we learned and how happy we were while we were learning. If those days could only come back!"

To one who was not a member of that company, it is difficult to portray just what made it great and just what gave those days their thrill. In a sense, we were pioneers and for that reason perhaps many of the unpleasant things one meets in studios nowadays were lacking. We were all friends and equals. There was no "up-stage" demeanor. No one ever thought of himself as out-ranking someone else in the company. We didn't realize we were making movie history and that we were destined to be the stars of today. Yet almost every member of that Biograph Company, the "White Company" of the industry, has a name with which to conjure today.

And the reason, I believe, lies in the invaluable training we received at the hands of Mr. Griffith. With the exception of Mary Pickford, we were shifted around, from lead to extra, and back again to lead, so that we became capable of meeting any situation, playing any part. Mary was the star. At that time she was called the "Biograph Blonde." Perhaps you remember that title. And she was wonderful to all of us. I have never seen in any studio a person so universally beloved as was Mary.

But she was the only star. All the rest of us girls, and most of the men, climbed the heights one week and played a leading part, only to be cast for a very tenuous bit of atmosphere, the next week. It was wonderful training. It prevented us from getting "swelled heads." And Griffith, in his wisdom, played upon it, in the kindest way. The projection room was on the top floor and when a picture was being run in which one of us had played a leading role, Griffith would come to the head of the stairs and shout,

"Come up and look at a great artist." And up we would troop.

Perhaps it was I that was the artist. Perhaps it was Blanche Sweet or Priscilla Dean or Florence LaBadie or Jeanie MacPherson. But we'd all go up anyway, and watch the picture. And Mr. Griffith would comment on it, showing where it was good and where the technique of the "great artist" was a bit faulty. And if we were inclined to get a bit chesty, someone would say, "Watch the old cranium and don't let it enlarge, my dear. Remember I was a great artist two weeks ago."

It was that training that has enabled that little company to hold its own, ever since, with the stars that have risen and set in the movie firmament. Great artists of the spoken stage have come in, new personalities have been discovered, but no one ever has been able to down the old Biograph company. They wouldn't stay down. They knew too much about the technique of motion picture acting. They knew what to do with their hands and feet, how to stand and sit and walk. They were, and they are, actors, trained in a school that began with the A, B, Cs, and extended into the higher reaches of technique, with frequent trips back to the primer class.

Consider for a moment the people that worked with Mr. Griffith during the two years I was his pupil. I believe I can remember most of them. Some of them are no longer living but the majority, if not retired, are still among the vivid personalities of the screen.

Among the women were Mary Pickford; Dorothy and Lillian Gish; Jeanie MacPherson, who is a famous scenarist; the late Florence LaBadie, a beautiful and talented actress who would have gone far but for the unfortunate accident that cut short her career; Blanche Sweet; Lottie Pickford; Bess Meredyth, another famous scenarist; Florence Lawrence; Claire MacDowell, Linda Griffith and Grace Henderson.

Among the men is an even greater percentage of famous names, such as: Bobbie Harron, Wilfred Lucas, Edwin August, Henry Walthall, Mack Sennett, Edward and Jack Dillon, Dell Henderson, Pathe Lehrman, the late Joseph Graybill, James Kirkwood, Owen Moore, Frank Evans, Alfred Paget, Charles West, Frank Powell, Harry Hyde, Jack Pickford, Harry Carey, Christy Cabanne, Charles Mayo and George Nichols. John Waldron, who is now studio manager for Mack Sennett, was studio business manager for Griffith and the payroll, in "them stirring days" was somewhat different from now. Imagine what it would cost to maintain a company, nowadays, composed of the people I have just mentioned!

My first parts were all in tragedies. Mr. Griffith never could see me as a comedienne. I was always playing dying mothers or something. I certainly did get sick of dying and my fondest wish was that I might play a role in which I went on to the end of the picture without becoming a casualty. During most of my first two years I never had a chance at comedy. But it was great training and I learned, from the heavier parts, many things that have been of inestimable value in comedy roles.

And so we continued, one day up and the next down again to extra, with no one but Mary Pickford sure of having a good part. It taught us never to lose our heads, to be kind to those less fortunate than ourselves. And our association with Mr. Griffith showed us what loyalty meant. When the big money began to be apparent in pictures and the influx of stage stars began, Griffith stuck with us. We were his pupils, his children, his "gang," and he always believed in us and in our destinies.

I remember one picture in which I played shortly after I joined the company. The name of it has vanished from my recollection, but it was heavy, oh, very heavy, and I played a vampire part, with Bobby Harron and Grace Henderson. They dressed me all up for a "vamp" and they gave me a huge black velvet hat. Oh, how I loved that hat. It was a great, big one. It seemed to me it was yards wide. I never expected to have one like it, of my own, and I used to almost cry when I had to take that lovely hat off at night.

My chance in comedy really came as an accident. There was nothing for me to do, one week, and Mr. Griffith sent me down to Huntington, L. I., where the Biograph comedy unit was making a funny picture. Frank Powell was directing it. But when I got there I found there was nothing much for me to do in the comedy, either, so I went swimming, off the pier. In those days, you know, comedies were born, not made. By that I mean that there was no script. They made them up as they went along.

And as I was diving and swimming around, it occurred to Mr. Powell that it would make a good scene for the comedy if one of the characters watched me through a pair of binoculars. So they "shot" him as he peered through



the glasses and then they came down to the pier and turned the camera on me for a dive or two. And that, I believe, was the origin of the bathing girl idea in comedies. It happened to be my one and only appearance as a bathing girl but it was the genesis of many miles of film, born of the idea that occurred to Mr. Powell that afternoon. Doubtless it would have come eventually, anyhow, but that picture was the forerunner of them all, as nearly as I can remember.

I had been told to do a few comedy stunts while the camera was focused on me and they appeared to like me in the role. So they asked Mr. Griffith, in the next picture, if they could borrow me again. At first he demurred. In his opinion, I was a total loss as a comedienne, and besides, he had a part for me in another picture. I've forgotten what it was now, but I suppose I would have been completely extinct, as usual, before the end of the last reel. I wasn't so crazy about comedy, either. I had an ambition to become a g-r-r-reat tragedienne. I suppose I thought I was destined to become a second Duse. But Griffith finally yielded. I was loaned to the comedy company for a second picture and I've been an alleged comedienne ever since.

What I didn't know about comedy then would have filled the Congressional Library. Tears had been my role. I could cry like a 40,000 barrel gusher, and at a minute's notice. But I couldn't smile. I had been a patient and beautiful corpse too often. So when they told me to smile I would grin, momentarily, and then let my face slip back into my very best funereal expression. It was awful. They told me to hold the smile and I would assume a "smile or bust" expression that had about as much mirth in it as Lucrezia Borgia's company manners. My idea of smiling was to let the smile freeze, with the result that I resembled a Cheshire cat during many hundred feet of film.

I was furious. I thought it was terrible of Mr. Griffith to farm me out to the comedy company. Gone were all my dreams of tragedy, of stalking across the set, with the spectators sighing and shuddering at my art. But again I didn't know my luck. Opportunity was knocking and I was totally deaf to her insistence.

Next week I want to tell you how I became a determined and unrepentant comedienne, how I left the Biograph and went to work for another company at a salary that I thought was affluence itself. The break-up of the Biograph had commenced, and we were scattered, gradually, all over filmdom, leaving the home nest with much regret and taking with us memories that never have been effaced.

\* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, March 9, 1924

**Mabel Normand's Own Life Story -- Chapter 4**

**First Salary as Star was \$125 a Week!**

I suppose every woman can remember the times in her life when she was speechless. It happens so seldom. And if that temporary paralysis meant as much to any one as it did to me, on one occasion, it is certain she would never forget it. It was there and then that I learned the value of a closed mouth and a quiet smile and although I haven't always profited by the lesson, it made an ineffaceable impression.

It began at Luchow's, a famous little place where the members of the Biograph Company used to go for luncheon. I was still with the Biograph, getting \$35 per week. But several members of the company had received offers from the New York Motion Picture Company, which was just starting.

Mr. Sennett was going to direct comedies for them and he told me, at Luchow's that he thought I might be able to get a position with them. He thought they might give me as much as \$50 per week and he suggested that I go with him to their offices and find out what they would offer. So I went.

The company had elaborate offices in a big building at Union Square and after we waited a few minutes Mr. Sennett introduced me to Mr. Bauman[n] and Mr. Kessel, the heads of the enterprise. They were very nice, said they had seen me on the screen and liked my work and asked me if I would sign with them providing they gave me feature parts and capitalized my name.

At that time, as you will remember, the names of motion picture players were virtually unknown. It was the company that was featured. Mary Pickford was known as the "Biograph Blonde"--can you imagine it? If any one ever spoke of me it was as "the dark-haired girl of the Biograph" or something like that. The company considered it bad policy to play up the names of the actors. But Bauman and Kessel were going to depart from that policy. And they offered me \$60 per week!

Right there is where the silence occurred. I thought it was wonderful, but I didn't say anything for a minute and Mr. Bauman raised the offer to \$75 per week. And while I sat there trying to find words to thank them and exercising my fingers so they would be ready to grab a pen, they excused themselves and went into the next room for a conference. "Oh, oh," I said to myself, "they're going to have an argument. He offered me too much and the rest of them won't pay it." And I sat there ready to weep at having this chance to make real money snatched away from me. But when they came back, before I could tell them that I would take \$60, Mr. Bauman announced that they had decided to offer me \$100 provided I would sign a contract before I left the office.

This time I got my mouth open, all right, but nothing came out of it. Absolutely nothing. Not even a gurgle. I thought if I could make \$100 a week for one year I would have all the money I would need for the rest of my life. I just couldn't talk, so I finally closed my lips to wait until my tongue felt less than a foot thick. And the next thing I heard was Mr. Bauman saying:

"I don't think Miss Normand is satisfied. I guess we had better make it \$125 per week."

This time I managed to make motions for them to bring on the contract. I was afraid the building would burn down before I could sign it. Or they might have offered me \$150 and then they would have had to phone for an ambulance. Anyhow I signed for it, somehow. And I started to work.

The company had no studio. All our pictures were exteriors and were made at Fort Lee, N. J. They consisted almost entirely of "chases." Of course, there were a few other scenes but the pictures, invariably, were built around some one getting pursued by everyone else in the company. Ford Sterling was playing with me. Sometimes I would chase him and sometimes he would chase me. And then just to vary it a bit we would join forces and all the rest of the gang would chase us.

The lack of equipment and of a studio worried us a great deal and most of the members of the company were very discouraged over the first few pictures. But they proved a great hit and made a considerable amount of money, for those days. That summer was terribly hot and we had been working so hard that the company decided to send us all to California for the winter and let us make pictures out there. So we started in at a studio in Edendale, on the site of the present Sennett studio. At that time it consisted of a small house, one stage and a row of four or five

dressing rooms. It was at this time that Mr. Sennett originated the idea of the “comedy cops” and the Keystone Comedies, as the pictures were called, became famous for these policemen and their decrepit patrol wagon.

A good bit of our stuff we used to “steal.” Thomas H. Ince, for instance, was making war pictures at that time. I think he was filming “Civilization” and several others that called for a lot of gunpowder and dynamite. And we used it all, never fear.

Whenever we heard there was to be an explosion of some sort at “Inceville,” down we would go, cops and all, and we would be somewhere around, out of range of Mr. Ince’s cameras when the “shot” went off. We were plenty close, too. Rocks and cinders dropped all around us, but Ford Sterling and I kept right on working. We really didn’t feel natural if we weren’t dodging boulders or running down a hill with the top of the hill slipping after us. And the cops became so agile I believe they could have dodged all the raindrops in a cloudburst.

But we enjoyed it. It was great fun. “Stealing” our stuff was lots more exciting than just “shooting” it on our own. Mr. Sterling and I became quite adept at it. I remember a baby show that was held on the roof of a big department store. We wanted to work this into a picture, but some other company had bought the rights to have their cameras on the roof. So we just butted in, as usual. We were escorted off that roof thirteen separate and distinct times, but we weren’t a bit discouraged. Being thrown out didn’t mean a thing. Back we would come and the camera man would get a lot of people around him to conceal the camera until the right minute, then they would step aside and I would leap off the platform where the babies were being judged and rush madly toward the camera with Ford in close pursuit.

The other company would make a fuss and some real “cops” would lead us gently but firmly to the stairway.

We had more fun than a circus that afternoon. We substituted a child of slightly darker hue for one that a fond mother had left in a perambulator and the baby show almost broke up in a riot when she came back a little too soon. Meanwhile Mr. Sennett was looking for an additional comedian and the New York office of Keystone wired him that they had seen an English comedian at the old Hammerstein Theater with whom they were very much impressed. They thought it might be a good idea for Sennett to talk to him and find out how he would photograph. His name, they said, was Chaplin, first name Charles.

But reaching Chaplin proved difficult. He was on tour and Sennett wired him at several different places with no result. Charlie didn’t realize what was being shaken in his face and it wasn’t until he came to the old Pantages Theater in Los Angeles that Sennett managed to talk with him.

I remember the night we all went down to see Chaplin. We liked his performance and Mr. Sennett went back-stage to talk with him. He brought him out and my first meeting with Charlie was on the sidewalk in front of Pantages. I can see him now. He had on a checked suit, a black bow tie and a derby hat, and, at that time, he had a very pronounced English accent. At first he didn’t seem to care much about talking business with Mr. Sennett. He had an idea of going back to England and he didn’t want to leave his act until he was ready to depart. But after a visit to the studio he finally agreed to take the job as soon as he could arrange to have some one fill his place in his act. He signed for a year with Keystone at a salary of \$100 per week.

For a while Charlie and I played together but he soon became so popular that he was featured in separate pictures. We worked hard and fast in those days. We used to make a picture and have it ready to send to New York in two weeks. And when Charlie’s year was up he was perfectly willing to sign with Keystone again, at an advance in salary. He wanted \$200 a week, if I remember rightly, and Mr. Sennett wanted to give him \$175. They negotiated for some time over this difference. We were all at San Francisco, I remember, attending Mayor Rolph’s ball and Chaplin came up there to talk with Sennett. While they were still disputing over terms (Mr. Sennett had to count the pennies because he was allowed a very small sum to make his pictures), Charlie met Broncho Billy Anderson, who was making pictures for Essanay at Niles, Calif. Mr. Anderson realized Chaplin’s tremendous talent and offered him \$500 per week to sign with Essanay.

Charlie told me about it at the time and we were both thrilled. But he didn’t want to go to Chicago, where the head office of Essanay was located, and he didn’t give Mr. Anderson a definite answer. The next day I met Charlie on the street and he told me that Essanay had offered him \$1000 per week.

Well! Neither of us said a word. We just put our hands on our hips and stood and looked at each other. Again I was speechless. And so was Charlie.

“Do you think they mean it?” he asked me. “Do you really believe they can be serious? Is there that much money?”

It was so amazing that he should jump, overnight, from \$100 to \$1000 per week that we couldn’t believe it. We thought Essanay were just talking for exercise. But it was all true and Charlie signed the contract and went to Chicago at the first really big salary in the history of motion pictures.

It was shortly after this that Mr. Griffith, Mr. Ince and Mr. Sennett united in forming the Triangle Motion Picture Company and that was where I got my first real chance. I was still making two-reelers almost exclusively but it was decided to let me graduate. I had made, I believe, only two five-reelers up to that time. One was “Tillie’s Punctured Romance,” with Chaplin and Marie Dressler, and the other was a picture with Owen Moore.

So they built a studio on Sunset boulevard, called it the Mabel Normand studio and began to make “Mickey.” F. Richard Jones was the director and the picture proved to be the first real big comedy hit of the industry. By virtue of having been the star of that picture I became a very valuable young lady and I too began to get \$1000 per week.

It was at about this time that I received a long distance phone call from Samuel Goldwyn, in New York. He had told me, previously, that if ever I expected to make a change to let him know and when he telephoned me it was to say that he was leaving the Famous Players-Lasky Company, organizing Goldwyn pictures, and would like to have me work for him at an increase in salary. After a considerable amount of negotiations I accepted his offer and went to New York to appear in Goldwyn pictures. My first release was called “Three Million Dollars”<sup>228</sup> and was

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<sup>228</sup> I.e. *Dodging a Million*

directed by the late George Loane Tucker who directed "The Miracle Man." I remained with Goldwyn all through the war and had several directors who since have become national figures in the industry.

Next week I will tell you of my return to the Sennett company and of my more recent days in pictures.

\* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, March 16, 1924

**Mabel Normand's Own Life Story -- Chapter 5**

**Comedienne Says Taylor Slayer will be Captured**

Lack of punctuality is said to be an indication of poor breeding. If that is true, I must be the most ill-bred person in the world. I'm always late, somehow or other, no matter how hard I try to be on time. And when I was working for the Goldwyn Company I used to get a daily scolding either from Mr. Goldwyn or from Abraham Lehr, his associated, for this very bad fault. But I escaped once, thanks to a happy thought. I was reminded of it yesterday by glancing over Mr. Goldwyn's book on the screen in which he relates the incident.

I was supposed to be on the set, made up, at 9 o'clock. But I wasn't there, and as I was hurriedly donning the make-up in my dressing room I cudgeled my brain for some excuse which would let me out of the scolding I knew I deserved. I had just had some new photographs taken which were very good, so I seized one of them, autographed it to Mr. Lehr and dashed out on the set.

"Here's what made me late," I declared to Mr. Lehr, who was standing there with a face like a thundercloud. "It took me a terribly long time to make up my mind what to write on your picture."

Mr. Lehr took the photograph and read:

*Roses are read*

*And violes blue.*

*When I'm late*

*I think of you.*

That saved my life. The storm clouds lifted, and I went to work, thankful for the inspiration.

But my pictures with the Goldwyn Company were not particularly good, in my opinion. The stories were more suitable, in some instances, for the stage than the screen, which made it very difficult for the director and the star to turn out creditable work. I felt I was standing still, and I wanted to progress. Three years I worked for Goldwyn, two of them at Fort Lee, N. J., and the last year at Culver City. And it was when I came to California that John Waldron, general manager for Mack Sennett, brought me a story to read.

It was "Molly-O." He told me Mr. Sennett had suggested if I liked it and thought I would like to do it, I might come back to the Sennett fold. I did like it and talked the matter over with Mr. Goldwyn and Mr. Lehr, both of whom I found most fair, as they had always been. While we were discussing the matter I did "Head Over Heels" for the Goldwyn Company and after that they released me from my contract and I signed with Mr. Sennett to do "Molly-O."

This was followed by "Suzanna," and it was during the filming of that picture that the death of William Taylor occurred. Mentioning this matter is very unpleasant. I don't like it. Who would? Who would like to discuss, publicly, the tragic death of a friend? Not only is it personally painful, but, to my mind, it smacks of bad taste. However, Mr. Taylor's death and the tremendous public interest it aroused brought all of us who knew him well so much into the limelight that it seems silly to write my life story without mentioning it.

I had known Bill Taylor casually for years. I believe I first met him when he was directing Carlyle Blackwell across the street from the Sennett studio, but I saw him very seldom, and it was not until about a year before his death that I began to know him at all well. We were at a dinner party one night and sat beside each other. The party wasn't particularly interesting and we began to talk about various things, the screen, books, life in general. I found him extremely well informed and I liked his viewpoint of things. He was a brilliant man, a man of remarkable intelligence. We got into an animated discussion on several books we had read and the evening passed so pleasantly that we both remarked on it when the party broke up.

I did not see him again for about two weeks, when he called me on the phone and asked me to go to the opening of a picture at a downtown theater. After that I saw him rather frequently until he went abroad. And when he came back it happened that I was starting East on a vacation and our trains passed each other. When I returned in October and started to make "Suzanna" our friendship was revived. He had brought me some beautiful books from Europe, and we went to concerts and to see pictures together. He would tell me about new books he had read and would send them to me to see if my opinion was the same as his. It wasn't, always, and we had many a friendly argument about them.

During November I saw him seldom, as I was working very hard. We were trying to finish "Suzanna" on time and I was too tired at night to go out. I remember the studio gave me a birthday party on the tenth of November. It was at Mr. Sennett's home and nearly every one connected with "Suzanna" was there. I invited Mr. Taylor to go and I don't remember seeing him very much after that until the middle of December. He passed my house in the morning on the way to the studio and sometimes he would stop. Usually I was getting ready to go to the studio and if I had not finished making up I would wave to him from the window and he would go on. If I was ready he would come in for a minute, leave a book and talk about what he was doing or discuss my progress on "Suzanna."

On Christmas Day he called on me and gave me a beautiful set of Browning for a Christmas gift. Please don't think I'm trying to picture myself as a high-brow. I realize that a movie actress who reads Browning sounds like an anomaly, but I've read him, just the same. I'm not prepared to say, however, that I'm absolutely crazy about him.

Mr. Taylor asked me where I was dining Christmas night. When I told him he said he had been invited there, too, but would come late. We had a long talk that night and during the holidays I saw him more frequently. New Year's Eve I dined with him and some of his friends at the Alexandria Hotel.

During January I saw him several times a week, if I remember rightly. He would stop by my house and several times, on my way back from downtown I would stop at his home to return a book, to borrow one or to talk over scenes in "Suzanna" with him. I had great respect for his judgment and asked his advice frequently.

On the afternoon of the night he was killed, I went downtown very late, to have some silverware monogrammed. Some of it had been given me for Christmas and some of it I had given other people and asked them to let me have it monogrammed for them. I went to two different jewelry stores and had difficulty getting in as it was the

closing hour. But I finished my business, finally, went to a safe deposit box and left some things there and then telephoned to my house. I told my maid I thought I would stay downtown for dinner and see a picture. But she said Mr. Taylor had phoned several times and said he had a book for me that I had been trying to get. It had been a cloudy day and no one was working on location or on "outside sets."

I think the book was something by Ethel M. Dell. My maid also told me I had a call from the studio to report for work at 8 o'clock.

"Why don't you come home for dinner?" she said. "Stop at Mr. Taylor's and get the book and come home and go to bed. You will need the rest if you have to get up early."

So I said I would not stay down and I told my driver to go to Mr. Taylor's. His butler answered my ring and said Mr. Taylor was talking over the phone. I went in and I could hear him talking. But his answers consisted of "yes" and "no," and in thinking of it afterward I got no clue to the person on the other end of the wire.

"Oh, I know what you've come for," he said when he hung up the receiver. "Mamie [Owens] (my maid) told you I had that book for you."

He was having dinner and I sat at the table with him for a few minutes and then told him I was going home as I had to rise early. He said he would go to the car with me, and as we were walking he said he had a lot of work to do, but might call me about 9 o'clock to see how I liked the book. But he never called. The last I saw of Bill Taylor was when he waved "good-by" to me as my car pulled away from the curb. I turned and waved to him through the glass in the back. But I didn't think it was going to be such a long good-by.

In the morning, while I was making up to go on location for "Suzanna," my telephone rang. It was a friend who lived in the same court with Taylor. She told me that his butler was running up and down the court shrieking that Bill was dead. "He died of heart failure," she said. I implored her to find out if it was true and to call me back immediately. In a few minutes she called again.

"Yes, it's true," she said.

It was a terrible shock. I liked and admired him so much. And I had talked with him only twelve hours before. I phoned the studio that I could not work that day and took off that remnant of my make-up that had not already been ruined by tears. As a matter of fact it was three weeks before I returned to work. Those of you who followed the Taylor case, in all its intensity, undoubtedly realize what I went through. I was the last person known to have seen him alive. I was interviewed, questioned, had statements taken by stenographers and was harassed by newspapermen until I was forced to move into the country and was on the verge of nervous prostration. Detectives and district attorneys swarmed around me and my name was flaunted on the front page of every newspaper in the country for weeks. It was a terrible experience. As I look back on it now, I don't blame them, so much. They wanted to find out who had perpetrated this atrocious murder. And they were leaving no stone unturned that might hide a clue. But at the time I did blame them. I thought it was terribly unfair. I was doing everything I could to help the authorities, but no one seemed to give me any credit for it whatever.

And that is why I want to say right here that there is no person in the world who will be as glad as Mabel Normand when the murderers of Bill Taylor are brought to justice. Not only because he was my friend, but because I have a peculiarly feminine desire to have a lot of people feel sorry for the way they treated me during those hectic days. I believe implicitly that Taylor's death will be solved. It is impossible for me to believe that the person or persons who did that thing will escape forever from paying for their crime. If I have my own convictions on the matter, I have not an iota of proof and my own experience would make me the last person to point a finger of suspicion unjustly.

There, that's done. If you knew how I've been dreading this part of my story, how I hated to discuss this most poignant episode of my life, you would realize how glad I am that it's finished. But there's still a fly in the ointment. Next week, in the last installment of my story, I suppose I've got to discuss the Dines matter. It, too, aroused a lot of public comment and I'm not going to dodge it. But it was very different from the Taylor case. It was so unnecessary, so foolish, almost a burlesque tragedy, but it came near being more serious, to me, than the death of Mr. Taylor.

I have brought my story now up to the point of "The Extra Girl," my most recent picture. Next week I will finish and say "Good-by," or at least "Aurevoir."

\* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, March 23, 1924

**Mabel Normand's Own Life Story -- Chapter 6**

### **Tragic Dines Affair**

There is one locality in which I have no desire to travel. It is the interior of Africa. For the reason that I am not particularly crazy about lions. I came to that decision during the filming of my most recent picture, "The Extra Girl." During several scenes in that picture I was on conversational terms with a lion, sitting almost between his paws and trying to look playful and unconcerned. Despite the assurance of his trainer that he was a really nice lion, as lions go, I doubt if my heart action was quite normal.

I got through without mishap, despite the fact that I felt most of the time like a jungle cafeteria. But ever since I have had a great respect for Daniel.

It was after "The Extra Girl" was finished that Courtland Dines was shot by my chauffeur, Horace Greer. And once again my name was headlined throughout the country. What a futile, unnecessary mess it all was! It makes me fairly writhe, even now, in impotent anger, to think about it or to discuss it. It was so recent and the circumstances were blazoned so completely all over the United States that I suppose it is useless to tell the story over again.

And as a matter of fact, I am unable, anyhow, to tell you just what occasioned the shooting. For I didn't see it. I supposed I was making a New Year's call, which I had intended to be brief. But I would have been better off if I had gone to the beach and spent a nice, quiet day in a shooting gallery.

I had remained at home all that afternoon answering Christmas and New Year cards, and it was after 5 o'clock when I stopped at Mr. Dines' house after leaving word at home to call me and remind me of a fictitious engagement, so that I would have an excuse for leaving early.

And when my driver came back for me, and Mr. Dines admitted him, I stepped to the door of another room to talk for a minute with Edna Purviance, who was standing before the mirror there.

It was then that the shooting occurred, and just what occasioned it I still am at a loss to understand. Greer, who is a well-meaning boy, declares Dines attempted to hit him, and claims he shot in self-defense. Perhaps that is true. I don't know.

But whether it is nor not, this fact remains, after the smoke has cleared away: Greer may have aimed at Dines, but he hit me, figuratively speaking. Dines was dangerously wounded, and Miss Purviance and I were escorted to the police station, where they took our statements while an enthusiastic crowd of newspaper men wrote furiously. Out over the country went the story and the censors began to sit up and sharpen their official shears.

No waiting for an official inquiry. No calm sifting of the facts. I had been mentioned in headlines in a sensational story. And it was my second offense, since I had been "featured" also in the Taylor case. So off must go my head. And for a time it looked like the head, filmically [sic] speaking, would roll on the stones of the courtyard. One censor in a Southern State wrote my studio and said, "As far as we are concerned, Miss Normand is guilty until she proves herself innocent." Twentieth century America!

But before the movement to ban my films gained any real headway the common sense of the country began to assert itself. Anyone who doubts that our nation still has many a champion of fair play should have read my mail during the next few weeks. I used to sit and read those letters with tears of gratitude in my eyes. Most of them were from women.

Anyone who ever tries to make me believe, after this, the old aphorism about woman's unfairness to other women will have an impossible task. I shall never forget the sense of justice that American women manifested toward me. In those thousands of letters the sentiment was almost identical.

"We are not going to sit by and watch this happen. We women have something to say about things, nowadays, and we're going to see that you get a square deal."

It was this storm of protest from fair-minded persons that slowed-up the censors and saved me from being thrown to the lions. As I write Greer's preliminary hearing has been held and he is bound over to the Superior Court to answer the charge of shooting Dines. It may be months before a decision is reached, and meanwhile newspaper stories will appear from time to time dealing with the "Normand Case," as some of them call it. Such are the penalties of earning one's living by appearing before the public.

My pictures have been clean and wholesome always. I suppose even my most bitter critic will admit that. And to carry out the analogy of the censors if a prominent manufacturer of soups should be mentioned in a sensational newspaper story, would it not be consistent to advise every one immediately to refrain from partaking of his soup?

But I don't want to seem to argue the matter. The facts in the case have been printed, voluminously. The public must judge for itself. After all, they are the final arbiters.

But I've made a couple of resolutions. One is to always engage a chauffeur after this who has no "chivalry complex" and who is so scared of all kinds of "shooting-irons" that he will run a mile if any one shows him one. The other is to depart quickly wherever I hear a loud noise.

Will Rogers says that if any one is shot in Los Angeles hereafter, and I am known to be in the city, I am certain to be arrested on suspicion. And from my one experience with police stations, I can think of a lot of places in which I would rather be.

And now I have finished. This story has been brief, necessarily. Newspapers have not the space to print a really detailed life story. Only the high spots can be touched. But I've enjoyed telling it. And if it has been of interest, I'm glad. If it has bored you, in spots, I'm sorry. And I wonder, really, whether or not you have enjoyed it.

Nothing is so interesting, so worthy of study as the complex mind of the public. Especially is it interesting to an actress. Not only because it means dollars and cents to her, if the public happens to like her, but because it is so variable, so dependent upon trifles and unconsidered details. It's a marvelous thing, the public mind. Politicians and showmen have been trying to anticipate it for a good many years. Most of them guess wrong. But it's a lot of fun guessing, anyhow.

So now I make my exit from The Examiner columns. Or, perhaps it would be better to say my exit as far as my autobiography is concerned. It would be rather too much to expect a permanent vacation. Reportorial friends tell me I have become what they call "good copy." Whatever that it, I don't like it. But that doesn't seem to matter much. They make you like it.

So here's hoping the next time I occupy the front page it will be something nice, something wholesome.

In conclusion, may I say a word, a serious word, not only for myself, but for any other person in screen or stage circles who may by virtue of unkind circumstances, attain a measure of unpleasant notoriety. Be fair to them. Remember that since they are semi-public persons, an importance will be lent to their every action that may be entirely out of proportion to its true value.

"Judge not" is a good maxim for all of us. To criticize is easy. But to view the errors of our fellow-beings with human tolerance and a kindly heart is more difficult--and much more wonderful.

Au 'voir,

MABEL.

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* from *Sunday News*, The News, New York City, June 29, 1924

Mabel Normand Victim of An Unkind Fate

by Julia Harpman

Poor Mabel! All Hollywood is trying to save Mabel Normand. Mabel the versatile; Mabel the generous, all-forgiving, and much suffering, is one of the most fascinating characters in the land where klieg lights are the only halos.

Mabel has been charged with many sins of which she was not guilty. There is a close affinity between Mabel Normand and trouble. She has known the height of success and the depth of disillusionment. She has been the favored of princes and the play-thing of tragedy. Twice, when she had climbed to the apex of public commendation, a crime, in which she took no active part, besmirched her reputation because of her friendship with the victim. The fickle public, outraged by a supposed affront, then turned its back on the girl whose comic antics on the screen had cheered multitudes.

Fate Twice Has Tried to Dethrone Her

"I never hold a grudge," says Mabel Normand. "Life is too short."

But Mabel might well hold a grudge against a fate which has twice, through the medium of crimes in which she took no active part, toppled her from her high place in moviedom.

Factory girl, artist's model, movie extra, bathing beauty, the vivacious star worked her way slowly to the top only to find it a place of tragedy and disillusionment.

Quite a Student

Mabel Normand has a natural ability for absorption. she has a keen mind, with an eager, searching quality for knowledge. Freud and Nietzsche [Nietzsche] have been her favorites. She delved into philosophy and studied French and one of her pleasures was to converse in the foreign tongue with William Desmond Taylor, whose murder in Hollywood two years ago brought Mabel her first public tragedy.

Mabel was born in Boston -- she does not say how long ago. She is still young; less than thirty, her friends declare. At an early age Mabel, with her parents, moved to Staten Island and there she went to school.

Slim and vivacious, with a cloud of black hair framing her rather piquant features, Mabel developed an unusual beauty -- a beauty that attracted Charles Dana Gibson, James Montgomery Flagg and other noted artists, for whom Mabel posed.

First Movie Job

Mabel's family was poor, and Mabel, always anxious to help anyone needing assistance, was eager to add whatever bit she might earn to the family funds. For a time she worked in the Butterick pattern factory. Then she became a model for illustrators and after a short time, found favor with such artists as Gibson and Flagg.

Her first job in the movies was as an extra in a costume picture directed by David Wark Griffith. Mabel was one of six pages, costumed in doublet and tights. She was to receive the huge sum of \$5 a day, with double pay if the work kept her at night. Griffith decided to work that first night, and Mabel, thinking only of the \$10 she was to receive, forgot to telephone home to tell her worried mother where she was.

It was nearly 2 o'clock in the morning when Mabel stepped off the ferry. Mrs. Normand there and then vetoed her daughter's career as an actress and Mabel returned to her posing.

A few days later, however, Mabel met Henry B. Walthall and Mack Sennett at Times square. They had been working with Griffith in the costume picture and had met Mabel then.

Fine Training

"Didn't you know," asked Sennett, "that those pages had to appear in several scenes? We telephoned all over to find you. You'll have to come back or we'll have to retake a whole day's work."

So Mabel went back to the camera. She was paid \$25 a week as a regular extra girl.

As a member of the old Biograph company. Mabel Normand received the excellent training of Mr. Griffith. From that company have come some of the greatest stars of the moving picture world -- Mary Pickford, the Gish girls, Blanch Sweet, Priscilla Dean, Henry B. Walthall, Mack Sennett, Owen Moore, James Kirkwood, Bobbie Harron and Harry Carey.

Through Binoculars

With the exception of Mary Pickford, who was then a star, all the actors and actresses were shifted about, sometimes playing star parts and at other times being cast as extras or to do small bits.

At first Mabel was cast as a tragedienne.

"I got sick of dying all the time," says Mabel. But Griffith did not think Mabel could play comedy parts.

During a dull weekend, while there seemed nothing for Mabel to do at the studio, she went down to Huntington, L.I., where some of Mabel's friends from the Biograph company were on location, making a comedy picture. The picture was being directed by Frank Powell.

Mabel, an excellent swimmer, was diving from the dock near the spot where the picture was being filmed. Mr. Powell decided to work Mabel into the picture by having one of the characters spy her through a pair of binoculars. Pictures in those days were made up as they went along. There was no script and the director's inspiration was responsible for many of the incidents which had never been thought of by the author of the original story.

On that occasion, Mabel was "shot" while doing a dive. That "shot," so little thought of at the moment of its taking, was the genesis of the bathing beauty picture, which was to become an institution in American filmdom.

The immediate outcome of the incident was the loan of Mabel to a company filming comedies. Then Mabel learned that she could be funny in spite of all the tears she had shed as the tragedy queen she had portrayed so long.

Mabel was getting \$35 a week from the Biograph company when Mack Sennett, for whom the dark-haired comedienne was destined to make a fortune, told her he was to direct comedies for the New York Motion Picture Company, which had just been organized. Sennett thought Mabel might get as much as \$50 a week from the new company.

Chase After Chase

But, instead of \$50, the officials of the new picture company offered Mabel \$60 and before she could accept increased the offer to \$100. Mabel was speechless with delight. The producers thought her silence signified her dissatisfaction with the amount and again raised the proposed salary to \$125. Mabel managed to gasp that she would go to work immediately at that stupendous figure.

Then began the amusing period of Mabel's professional life when she was forever being chased by some one. The new picture company had no studio. Consequently, most of the pictures were made out-of-doors. With a wee bit of plot the pictures consisted mainly of a series of chases. Mabel ran miles, pursued by Ford Sterling, who played opposite her then. Sometimes Mabel ran after Sterling and sometimes she was chased by the whole company. The comedy cops came into being, later to become famous in the Keystone comedies which were featured by Sennett.

Reaching the Heights.

Mabel and the company with which she had played all summer in the open at Fort Lee, N. J., were sent to California for the winter and the comedies they made there found favor with the public.

About that time Sennett looked about for a new comedian and was advised by the New York representative of Keystone that an Englishman, named Charles Chaplin, who had appeared at the Hammerstein theater, might be acceptable.

Chaplin was on tour. Sennett finally got in touch with him in Los Angeles. Their conference ended in Chaplin's signing up with Sennett for a year at a weekly salary of \$100.

Mabel and Charlie worked like fury, turning out pictures at the rate of one every two weeks. Charlie became so popular that, after a short period, he was featured in separate pictures. But during the time that Mabel and Chaplin worked together, the five-reeler, "Tillie's Punctured Romance," one of Mabel's best comedies, was filmed.

Mabel's big chance came with the formation of the Triangle Motion Picture company, when Griffith, Sennett and Tom Ince joined forces. Mabel had been making two-reelers almost exclusively, but she now was starred in five-reel comedies, the first of which was "Mickey," one of her greatest successes. The Triangle company built the Mabel Normand studio in Hollywood and Mabel became a real star at a weekly salary of \$1,000.

Playing with Roscoe Arbuckle in a series of comedies called "Fatty and Mabel," Miss Normand had become known to a widely scattered public. Now that she was a star, she made such pictures as "Three Million Dollars," "The Slim Princess," and "Molly O." From Triangle she went to Goldwyn and First National and then back again to Sennett.

On the night of Feb. 1, 1922, Mabel Normand was a person envied by millions. Her sparkling brown eyes, her slender form and dead white skin against the black hair which was always a bit unruly, were good to look down upon. She had brought her parents a \$25,000 home at 125 St. Marks place, New Brighton, Staten Island. She had lavished gifts upon her friends. She possessed exquisite clothes and furs, a car, a fortune in jewels and a goodly sum in the bank.

Mabel Normand loved by many, had not married. It is said in Hollywood that Mabel had a disastrous love affair when she was quite young; that, although Mabel's ideal had feet of clay and Mabel had seen them crumble, she was still loyal to the man whom she had given her heart years ago. However that may be, Mabel Normand was on such friendly terms with William Desmond Taylor, the mysterious Britisher whose real name was William Deane Tanner, that she wrote him letters to which she signed the love name "Blessed Baby."

Taylor's Tales.

Mabel wanted her letters returned and Taylor lied to her and said he had mailed them. When she did not receive them, Mabel went to Taylor's home to recover them and he lied again and said he thought one of his men friends had them.

All the world knows that Taylor was shot less than an hour after Mabel left him that night. The film comedienne was one of the first persons questioned by the district attorney. Henry Peavey, Taylor's colored servant, declared that his master had loved Mabel Normand and had intended to marry her. But Mabel denied that she and Taylor were engaged. Their friendship, she said, was close but only platonic. She didn't mind her letters being published, she said, except for the embarrassment attendant upon telling the world anything of a personal nature. But the district attorney saw no need to disclose the contents of the missives, inasmuch as they failed to furnish a clew to the murderer.

Six thousand people jammed the streets about St. Paul's pro-cathedral and in the crowds were all the famed freakish characters of Hollywood on the day that Taylor was buried, his bronze coffin wrapped in a British flag.

Through the mobs went a black-robed figure which stopped, sobbing, at the bier. And there she swooned. It was Mabel Normand.

Her Name Besmirched.

The murder and the subsequent investigation which turned the bright light of publicity into the darkest niche of Hollywood damaged Mabel's reputation. There was no evidence to connect Mabel with the crime, but boards of censorship condemned her because of her friendship with Taylor; because of her visit to his house and because she had written the "Blessed Baby" letters. In some states her pictures were banned. Mabel had been paid for her work in the pictures long before the boards of censorship took action and the only persons to suffer financially were producers and distributors. But, anyway, Mabel's funny antics were considered unfit for the public to gaze upon.

Mabel was very ill and, for a time, her life was despaired of. But she gradually recovered and when the district attorney decided that his oft-repeated questioning of Mabel regarding her knowledge of Taylor had been answered as best it could, Mabel was permitted to depart quietly for Europe.

Once out of the United States, Mabel's buoyant spirits returned. Six months after Taylor's murder Mabel astonished all fashionable Europe by appearing at the Auteuil races in a gown of cloth of gold, embroidered with jade and diamonds.

The manner in which Mabel wore her rings when she returned to the United States started the report that she had married while abroad and one of Mabel's fellow passengers aboard the Baltic confided that Mabel had admitted she married "a prominent well-to-do American business man." Later Mabel denied she had married and declared the "wedding ring" was simply a guard for a huge, square-cut diamond which she wore on her engagement finger.

Another Shooting.

Mabel began to work again and the boycott against her pictures was lifted.

Then last New Year's eve, Mabel chauffeur, Horace A. Greer, who calls himself "a little, weazened fellow with only one lung," was sent to the Hollywood home of Courtland S. Dines, wealthy oil man, where Mabel and Edna Purviance were having a New Year's cocktail with Dines.

Greer was to bring Mabel home from the Dines house -- that's all the chauffeur was expected to do. But the little man somehow got his instructions mixed and he entered the room where Mabel, Edna and Dines had been entertaining one another.

Greer shot Dines -- just why, the authorities did not ascertain. Dines said Greer was full of hop and declared that the chauffeur shot him because Greer was madly in love with Miss Normand and was jealous of her. Greer said Dines had threatened him with a bottle and both women declared they did not witness the shooting and knew not its cause.

Greer used a .25 caliber pistol which was the property of Miss Normand and which, until shortly before the shooting of Dines, had reposed on a table in Mabel's boudoir.

Greer explained his possession of the weapon by saying that Mabel's companion, Mrs. Edith Burns, told him she feared Mabel would use the gun some day to end her life and so he had taken it away. But Mrs. Burns denied she had ever told the chauffeur any such thing.

Again Mabel was condemned and her pictures boycotted. Mabel's work in "The Extra Girl," completed about the time of the Dines shooting, received great praise from moving picture critics, but, in spite of that, action was taken by various states to bar Mabel's pictures. In some states her pictures were banned for months, and then the boycott was lifted.

Her Health Shattered.

After many delays, Greer was tried and acquitted on a charge of assault to commit murder on Dines.

Shortly after the Dines affair Mabel was operated upon for appendicitis. She is still under the care of a physician and she appears very ill. Her eyes are bulging and they have lost their old luster. Her voice is dull, and at times, wandering. She is still pretty. Her clothes are beautiful in taste. Recently she bobbed her hair in a spirit of mischief, when a friend dared her to have it cut. She loves the theater; she still studies and infrequently writes a bit of verse -- beautiful, inspired things.

She has a new chauffeur for her big limousine. She lives in a pretty little house in Hollywood and occasionally visits her parents in Staten Island.

Mabel Normand has asked a square deal of the public which she amused and which condemned her. She expects to work again, but the old Mabel Normand, of the serio-comic and the quick wit, is gone.

"I never hold a grudge," she says. "Life is too short."

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\* from *Screen Secrets*, October-November, 1929

#### **The Tragic Life Story of Mabel Normand**

By Harry Carr

Mabel Normand will always be remembered as the little girl who littered up the floor of her limousine with peanut shells.

As the girl who walked down the street with THE POLICE GAZETTE under one arm and the highbrow ATLANTIC MONTHLY under the other.

As the girl with the brain of a philosopher and the ribald tongue of a gutter-snipe.

As the girl whose intimate friends included a woman of international notoriety, a gentle old priest, the queen of a night club, a learned judge of the Federal bench and an old Indian squaw.

As the girl whose friends and associates absolutely adored her; whose servants would willingly have committed murder in her behalf; yet who suffered as no other girl in Hollywood ever suffered from scandal and unjust gossip.

As the girl who all but ruined herself through self sacrifice; and met only with ingratitude.

As the girl to whom hardship and poverty brought happiness; to whom wealth and fame brought unhappiness.

The life of Mabel Normand is as full of contradiction as a chapter from ALICE IN WONDERLAND.

Mabel has always been a little tomboy.

She was born on Staten Island in New York Harbor, in 1894. Her people were miserably poor. She "jes' growed," like Topsy. The little girls of the neighborhood were too tame. She played most of the time with the boys. She could "skin the cat" on the limbs of all the trees, play "one ol' cat," wield a shinny club, and put up a pretty good fist fight on occasion.

Situated as Staten Island is, quite naturally the great playmate of all the children was the sea. Mabel played tag with the Atlantic Ocean from the time she could walk. It was important to her after life that she learned to swim and dive when she was a little girl. It wasn't tame-cat swimming that Mabel did. She could do any daring stunt in the water that the boys did. Her first distinction was to win the diving championship of Staten Island.

Another fact that was to be an important factor in her life was that in Mabel's gang was a little French-Canadian boy. His name at that time was Louis Coti. In later years he altered the spelling to Lew Cody. He and Mabel played "prisoners' base" and swam together, as little children. Now she is Mrs. Lew Cody.

She wasn't all boy, however. She had the usual yearnings of little girls for dolls and clothes. But her family had such a direful struggle for existence that she never had money for either.

I have heard Mabel tell how she used to stand in front of the story windows at Christmas time and look, until her little heart ached, at the dolls that some little rich girl would find in her Christmas stocking. She told me how one day she found her favorite window so frosted by the storm of the night before that she couldn't see into the window. So she leaned against the glass and licked a peek hole through the frost with her little hot tongue.

At the time Mabel was growing up, it was the period of girls and artists. "The Gibson Girl" upstaged the world from the covers of LIFE.

"The Penrhyn Stanlaws Girl" smiled out through a swirl of decoration. "The Howard Chandler Christy Girl" beamed from bachelors' walls. A girl with a lovely face found her footsteps drawn to the studios. Mabel was a beautiful child--with big lustrous eyes, a face that glowed with animation and intelligence. Her figure was superb.

Several girls of her acquaintance, among them Alice Joyce and Olive Thomas, were posing for artists: they brought Mabel along. She posed for many of the magazine covers and story illustrations. She posed for Penrhyn Stanlaws, C. D. Williams, Cole Phillips and other famous artists. She got 50 cents and hour and \$5.00 for posing for photographs for front covers.

Between times, she was a cloak model. Once every season, she and Alice Joyce and several other girls went to Wanamaker's in Philadelphia, as part of a New York fashion show.

Mabel got to be quite famous as a model. It was in the days of full skirts with ruffles and she won a prize offered for the most beautiful "Fluffy Ruffles" girl.



One day she and some of the other girls were reading a newspaper in one of the studios. They saw an advertisement stating that twenty beautiful girls were wanted at the motion picture studio of the Vitagraph Company.

At that time, Vitagraph came pretty near being the motion picture business. Under the leadership of Commodore J. Stuart Blackton, the company was beginning to reach out from little news flashes of flags waving from flag poles, cows standing in running streams, engines steaming down the tracks, and started little dramas.

Candidates appeared in swarms. Commodore Blackton says it was no job to pick out Mabel from the swarm. She shone out in the line of waiting candidates like a diamond on a sidewalk, she was so beautiful and so adorably young.

Her first picture narrowly escaped being her last. In order to make the tank deeper for diving, a pit filled with water and surrounded by planking was constructed inside the other tank. They didn't know much about studio engineering in those days. Just as Mabel was getting ready to make a dive into the tank, the whole thing burst with a roar and a rush of water. Everybody on the set was half drowned and heavy planks were flung about like chaff from a threshing machine.

After the swimming picture was finished, the rest of the twenty swimming young ladies were sent on their way. Mabel was offered a regular job.

Her salary sounded like staggering wealth. She got \$25--every week!

At that time, there were several stars in the Vitagraph Company who were headed for fame. Jim Corbett, ex-heavyweight champion of the world, was making some physical culture pictures with the help of Florence Turner. Anita Stewart was a lovely little girl just trying to break in. Maurice Costello--father of Helene and Dolores--was the bright star.

Mabel's first picture was with Maurice Costello. It was called "Over The Garden Wall." She played the part of a girl who disguised herself as a maid to test the affections of her rich lover.

Mabel didn't last long at Vitagraph. That corporation decided to stagger along without her services--owing to a typically Mabelesque incident.

The old elevated railroad ran past the studio--right past Mabel's dressing room. This was far too great a temptation for her tomboy heart. She used to stand in the window and kid the passengers as they went by. Some of them got sore and complained to the picture company officials, who looked very grave at Mabel. That young lady was defiant. "What do the dirty dogs want to look in my dressing room windows for?" she demanded. The discussion led to this and that. It finally led to Mabel's looking for a job.

At that time the old Biograph was getting started on Fourteenth street in New York. A long, lean actor named David Wark Griffith was begging for a chance to direct a picture. A very much embarrassed Irishman, who had been working his way from a pick and shovel on the streets to a job singing in a chorus, was asking them if they needed a strong man. His name was Michael Sinnott; but he preferred being called Mack Sennett. A little girl from the stage was there with her mother. Her name was Mary Pickford. Blanche Sweet, a young dancer, had come to do a dance scene in a picture and had lingered on to become an actress.

Billy Bitzer, the veteran camera-ace who photographed "Broken Blossoms," "Intolerance," "The Birth of a Nation" and other Griffith masterpieces, remembers when Mabel joined the Biograph company. He says she was at that time the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.

The trouble was that she didn't get the breaks. Her flare was for comedy and most of the Griffith pictures in those days were solemn and heavy affairs.

The other girls, Mary Pickford and the Gishes, tried very hard to get on. They were always experimenting with new makeups, making tests, etc.

But her job weighed very lightly on Mabel. So it can't be said that she made a great artistic commotion in the picture world.

In those days, Griffith was turning out a picture a week. Mabel, Mary Pickford, Blanche Sweet--and later the Gish girls and Florence Turner, were in most of them. Whenever there was a comedy bit, Mabel played it. When there wasn't, she frequently played heavy ladies with a dark past.

The first great adventure of her life came when Griffith brought the Biograph company out West. They found an old house in Los Angeles and played one-reel dramas.

Mabel lived under the chaperonage of Mrs. Pickford. Mabel was still the studio tomboy. She was recognized as a holy terror. She lived with Alice Joyce and another girl in one of the early day apartment houses in Hollywood.

From the first, Mabel showed brilliant promise as an actress. She had a vivid sense of drama, a striking originality and an artistic sympathy. The only trouble she had was in learning the technique of the screen. She wanted to go through every scene like a whirlwind. The camera was out of breath trying to keep up. But so great is Mabel's power of concentration and will power that she finally became noted throughout the film world for her perfect sense of time. Her screen scenes became models to be studied in that regard.

When I first knew Mabel Normand, she was a queen.

That was in 1916. The old Keystone comedies were then at the height of their fame. The Keystone Kops were known all over the world. The pay checks of the kops held many names afterward to be famous--Harold Lloyd, Mal St. Clair, Slim Summerville, Ramon Novarro.

It was like a big fun factory. There were twenty-two producing companies. When the studio automobiles drew up in front of the old Sennett lot every morning to take the comedians out on location, it looked like an army mobilization.

Comedies fairly poured out of the studio to the market.

It was a veritable kindergarten of genius and fame. Nearly every girl and many of the men afterward became famous screen stars--Phyllis Haver, Mary Thurman, Gloria Swanson, Louise Fazenda, Marie Prevost, Polly Moran, Wallace Beery, Raymond Hatton, Raymond Griffith, Charlie Chaplin, Chester Conklin, Ben Turpin, Mack Swain...

Mabel was the undisputed queen.

Everything in the Sennett lot was as Irish as Paddy's cart. Sennett had a grand studio office built for himself with paneling made of teakwood and mahogany; and always held all his business consultations in the Turkish

bath rubbing room. The big concrete studios were surrounded with old wooden shacks so that the whole effect was of Hooligan's Flats. There were even the goats and the stray cats and dogs wandering around having free fights in the scenery. It was the breath of life to Mabel. She was never happy in any other studio.

She was the most exasperating and the most adorable of stars. She was never there when they wanted her. Every picture was an alley fight with the director. And through it all, Mabel had about as much "side" and was about as "upstage" as an old hat. If she had any fighting to do (which she had about once an hour) she fought with Mack Sennett; she didn't take it out on the hired help.

I recall one day when there was an important scene to do. They were on location. One of Mabel's girl friends drove up. Mabel ran out to see her, climbed into the car and did not come back for two weeks.

In the beginning, Mabel's comedies were all made with Sennett and Fred Mace and Ford Sterling. As the company prospered and grew to proportions, Sennett stopped acting and became an executive.

About this time, a new comedian hove in sight. He had been a hick variety actor in Bisbee, Arizona. He got ambitious and came to Los Angeles, where he acted in little burlesque shows on Main street. His name was Roscoe Arbuckle. Sennett found him and put him into comedies with Mabel. To my mind, these pictures were the high tide of two-reel comedies. In many of them Mabel swam and dove. The success of these swimming-in-tights pictures was such that it became impossible to supply the demands of the market. They eventually led to the launching of the Sennett Bathing girls. In these pictures, Mabel had pretty much her own way. The ideas were often her own and the direction reflected her sure touch and daring originality.

I don't know why Mabel always wanted to appear as a roughneck. Even in those days she had a brilliant, thoughtful mind. She read books of heavy German philosophy that I couldn't even pretend to understand. She wrote good poetry--and hid it. Never was there a girl of such perversity. She always took a delight in putting her worst foot forward.

I remember when Charlie Chaplin joined the company. Sennett found him--as every one knows--acting in a vaudeville sketch called "A Night in a London Music Hall." Mabel took a dislike to him.

Sennett always treated every comedy recruit--no matter how famous--the same way. For two or three weeks, he let him roam around the lot--neglected, ignored--lower than the dust. It was during this lonely period that Charlie found those old shoes, the little cane and the funny derby hat in a corner of an old prop room.

When he finally got a part, it was in one of Mabel's comedies. She could not see him at all and did not like him. Mabel was as Irish as the map of Dublin. I imagine it would have been a singular Englishman who could have walked into her heart.

She and Charlie used to fight like a dog and a monkey. She did most of the fighting. She never called him by his right name. She invented the most extraordinary and diabolical nick-names for him. He didn't like the way she did comedy and she didn't like his brand. His technique was entirely different from the one then in vogue.

Money to Mabel was just something to be thrown around. She put it in a pocket that had no bottom, nothing but a hole. Compared with Charlie, Calvin Coolidge was a prodigal wastrel.

Charlie should have been suspicious when Mabel asked him to go with Fatty Arbuckle and three or four others for an evening at a night club at Vernon. But--for once--he wasn't. Every one ordered everything on the menu card. When the waiter came with the check every one but Charlie was dismayed to find that he had left his pocket-book at home. Charlie had to pay--and the bill was \$40. He would not speak to Mabel for weeks.

Mabel had a heart of gold. I do not believe any such generous or self-sacrificing soul ever lived in this world. She flung both her money and her quick sympathies around as though dollars were leaves and she owned an unlimitable forest.

Every workman on the lot adored Mabel. She used to borrow the "makings" from them and smoke Bull Durham cigarettes on the sets. She knew all about their children and how they were getting on in the world.

There was an old blacksmith who did all the iron work for the sets. Mabel had helped him when he stepped on a chunk of hot iron and had to go to the hospital. When his wife was operated on, she paid all the bills.

I happened to be wandering around the studio on the day before Christmas. The old fellow came up and, with shy embarrassment, handed her a funny little package--all rumped up. Mabel unwrapped what was probably the most outrageously ugly soft pillow cover ever seen in the world. She threw her arms around the old fellow's neck and kissed him twice--once for himself and once for his wife. After he had gone, she showed me the funny little uneven stitches, made by trembling, old fingers. Then she sat down and cried.

One thing I always liked about Mabel--the wives of her men friends were also her friends. Mabel had no more inhibitions than a savage of the South Seas. But there was nothing dirty about her private life. In fact, somewhere under Mabel's reckless swear words was a Puritan morality.

On one memorable occasion Mabel was dining in the Alexandria--at that time the fashionable gathering place of the movie stars. A famous woman star who had just been the co-respondent in a divorce suit, came over to Mabel's table. Mabel leaped up, flaming with anger. "Don't you talk to me--you--" she cried. "I may not be a Sunday school character, but I never have broken up homes and broken women's hearts. I let married men alone."

Dear harum-scarum Mabel! I remember once when she was coming to our house for a seven 'clock dinner. She arrived at 10:30 and innocently asked if she was late.

Texas Guinan told me how she looked out on her front steps one morning in her house on Tenth street, New York, and there sat Mabel eating peanuts--like a little street gamin. At that time one of the most famous motion picture stars in the world, she had gotten lonesome and had decided to come to have breakfast with Texas. She got there pretty early so she sat on the front steps a couple of hours.

One of the most thundering hits in the history of motion pictures was "Tillie's Punctured Romance." This was the first long comedy ever made. And it was made with misgivings. The trade did not believe a funny picture could hold the laughs for six or seven reels. Sennett cast it with a great triumvirate--Mabel, Fatty Arbuckle and Charlie Chaplin. It was a record breaker!

The exhibitors began yelling for more and Mabel was launched in "Mickey." The making of it was one long chapter of grief.

The story was written in the first instance by Anita Loos--later to become the author of GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES. And then the story was re-written by about everybody in Hollywood.

There are many ways of winning the heart of a lady; but if Lew Cody won Mabel in "Mickey," then it opens a new chapter in the art of love.

I remember that he chased her around and around the room, kicking over chairs while the fair one yelled for help. She ended up hanging on the edge of the eaves of a roof that overlooked a precipice. And in this case it was a real roof and a real precipice. Mabel was always a star athlete and absolutely without fear.

I don't imagine that one thought of marriage ever entered their heads during the making of "Mickey." All I can remember about them was the way they kidded on the sets. Mabel is the wittiest girl I have ever known and Lew is famous all over the country as a wise-cracker and story teller.

And as in the case of Mabel, so is the case of Lew. Behind their fooling is a wealth of sound "big" reading and genuine brain power. Anyone thinking of their courtship, will imagine it as good vaudeville, but I am willing to wager that they talk of books more than anything else.

You could write a book about the making of "Mickey." The adventures and mishaps were plenty. It dragged along for a year or more until everybody was disgusted and discouraged with the darn thing.

One little scene comes to my mind that is so characteristically Mabel that I shall have to tell it.

She had a scene with a bull dog. He took his art too seriously and--without meaning to--bit her very badly. There was a terrible commotion. Doctors were arriving with first aid and Mabel was laid out for treatment. Everybody had forgotten the dog. The poor, abashed fellow was covered with mortification. With the most woebegone expression I ever saw in a dog's eyes, he had crawled off into a corner of a set and lay there waiting for heaven to strike him dead for his iniquities.

It was Mabel who saw him. She flung off all the doctors and the nurses and the bandages and ran over to take the dog in her arms. "Look," she cried indignantly, "you have broken his heart." And she proceeded to explain to him that artists frequently fall under the spell of their art and hurt people.

"Mickey" was finally finished and, after a long period, released. It proved to be one of the greatest triumphs of the history of motion pictures. It is still known to the trade as "the mortgage lifter." I imagine it is still running somewhere. It brought Mabel an offer from Samuel Goldwyn of a starring job at a salary then unheard of--\$3,500 a week. She took the job.

She was riding on the crest of the wave when she left the old Mack Sennett Studio to become a \$3,500 a week star with Sam Goldwyn. She went out with the tide. She was never very successful or happy off that funny old Sennett lot.

While she was starring for Goldwyn, it happened that Geraldine Farrar was working in the same studio. Mabel made it her mission in life to see that the illustrious Geraldine did not lose her sense of democracy.

A male opera star was playing in Farrar's picture and they playfully carried their atmosphere with them. They used to sing little impromptu dialogue at each other. As for instance: "Good Morn-ING! how are you this mo-o-o-orn-i-i-ing?" And the tenor would reply from the balcony in front of his dressing room, "V-e-e-ry well, I THANK YOU." Naturally this was too much for Mabel. One day the opera stars were horrified to hear another voice chiming into their duet with an outburst of song not calculated to add to the dignity of either, or the peace and harmony of the situation.

Farrar was naturally nervous about being watched when she acted. She complained to the management that Mabel stood around the scenery and rubbered at her. The management tactfully suggested that Mabel find some other kind of entertainment. Mabel insisted that she had to look at something and she didn't know where else to look. Whereupon all the Farrar sets were boxed in like a national bank vault. The world went very well, then--until it was discovered that Mabel was peeking through a knot hole. The knot hole was plugged up. One day Miss Farr heard a noise that seemed to come from above. She glanced up to see that that terrible infant had shinned up a balcony and was looking down at her from the roof.

If Mabel had thrown her money around before, she poured it out in floods now. Every rag tag in Hollywood who could think of a sob story touched Mabel.

In the middle of her engagement she made a little trip to Paris which is still historic. One of the Paris dress makers sold her a gold gown for \$10,000; she bought enough jewelry to stock a store. Mabel still has one of the most marvelous collections of gems in the world.

When she came from Paris--having paid all the expenses of her girl playmates, she told what a grand time she had had. This made some of her other girl friends feel so sad and neglected that Mabel took the next boat back to show them a good time, too. Returning from this trip, she encountered another sad and neglected coterie on the dock and took the next boat for the third time. Altogether, those trips set Mabel back \$250,000.

Her Goldwyn pictures were not very successful. They were just pictures. Mabel was always essentially a comedienne and the art of comedy making is a very special talent. The Goldwyn studio just wasn't equipped for the job.

In the end, she drifted back to Sennett's--I believe on an arrangement with Goldwyn. In rapid succession she made three of the greatest comedies of her career--"Molly-O," "Suzanna" and "The Extra Girl."

"Suzanna" was such a knock-out that Mary Pickford offered Sennett \$50,000 for the story and tried to persuade him to take a vacation from his own studio and direct her in a picture. Mary told me she would rather have had Mabel Normand's work in that picture to her credit than anything else she had ever seen on the screen.

Providence at this time evidently decided that Mabel had been licking the buttered side of the bread about long enough. Down on her head came a series of the most singular misfortunes that ever befell a star.

She had a personal quarrel with Mack Sennett that, I think, broke her heart. I think that Mabel had always loved this big handsome Irishman.

For two years, then, she lived almost the life of a recluse. She had a woman companion who was half maid and half pal. Mabel read and wrote. I have seen some of her poetry. It has a remarkable quality. None of it has ever been printed. She keeps it in a locked book.

The day that William Desmond Taylor was murdered, Mabel woke up to find herself the heroine of an international love episode.

I have among my papers a memorandum of Mabel's own account of her affair with Taylor. It gives a breezy idea of the way Mabel talks: "Well," she said, "it seems like Mr. Taylor was the odd man when we went to

parties and I was the odd girl going around with a married crowd--Ruth Roland, Henry King and a lot of married couples.

"A lot of people thought Taylor was very fond of me and that I didn't return it. Then they decided that we were engaged; then they made up their minds that I wasn't very nice to him and that we had quarreled.

"I never had any quarrel with him--except for instance when we were at a party or something and I would run away and pay attention to a lot of other people. Bill would say, when we were going home, that I didn't treat him nicely. And I would say: 'For God's sake, why do you stand around with that trick dignity of yours? You make me sick.'

"Bill would say: 'Good God, don't you know I love you?'

"And I would say: 'Well, then for God's sake, don't be melodramatic about it.'"

Mabel was the last person to see Taylor alive. She had come to his apartment to get a book. He gave her the book; they talked for a few moments; then he took her to her limousine. He was next seen dead on his dining room floor.

Mabel was examined and cross-examined by the detectives. She insisted that she knew nothing about the murder. She was such a delicious morsel for gossip that the papers couldn't let her alone. In spite of some letters that Mabel was very anxious to get back and which were afterward found in the murdered man's riding boots, I think that it was never a serious love affair.

Every other person connected with the affair was allowed to forget it, but some one was continually dragging the ghost of Taylor out and parading it before her.

Years afterward, a district attorney, anxious for publicity, whooped it up again and dragged Mabel back in--when she had finally struggled back to another start in motion pictures.

"Say," she said, "if I have to repeat this again, I am going to set it to music to relieve the monotony. I've already committed it to memory."

Mabel passed off the situation with gay courage, but it hurt. I have never seen a girl so crushed and humiliated.

Mabel was ill for a long time after the Taylor murder case. Her health had been failing for a long time. All this worry--these sleepless nights--didn't help. Her picture career seemed to have faded away. Her finances were in a terrible condition. It looked like seventeen kinds of ruin were staring her in the face.

One thing about Mabel though; some one always seems to arrive with a net when she is falling. In this case it was an attorney--Claude I. Parker and his brother, Ivan Parker. Some of Mabel's most devoted friends are professional men of highest standing.

I imagine that no attorney ever tackled a more terrible mess than Mabel's finances. In her safety deposit box he found pay checks that had lain for years without being cashed. Her check book looked like the daily record of a charity institution. Checks for \$1,000--checks for \$3,500--\$2,000--\$2,500...to people she scarcely knew.

By main strength and violence, her attorney would drag Mabel into his office and she would sit like a guilty, naughty little girl while he went over her check stubs.

"Now," he would say, "why in the name of the seven hinges of hell did you give that woman \$4,000?"

"Oh, Mrs. Thingamobob--whatever her name is..." Mabel would say. "Sure I gave her the money."

"But why?" thundered the exasperated lawyer.

"Why, she needed it," answered Mabel--as though that were final and satisfactory.

Mr. Parker told me that--in spite of her scatter-brain method of making ducks and drakes out of good money--Mabel's memory is so extraordinary that she could remember every check she had written. Her mind is like a dictograph record.

She was finally straightened out financially. She now keeps her returned checks pinned to the stubs. A trust fund of \$50,000 has been set apart for the care and protection of her mother and Mabel herself is safely enjoying a good, sound income that is safe from all the sob sisters with itching palms. When they found they had to tell their driveling stories to a lawyer with thin tight lips, they faded away. Most of their undying friendship for Mabel also faded. One of her tragedies has been the ingratitude of the people for whom she has sacrificed herself.

About two years after the Taylor murder, another tragedy came slamming down out of a clear sky and all but destroyed Mabel. She was as much to blame for it as she was for the whale that swallowed Jonah.

It was a curious story. A love sick boy who had adored her from afar had finally gotten into her life as a chauffeur, to be near her. In the innocence of her heart, Mabel never dreamed that this quiet, subdued, polite young boy in chauffeur's uniform was wildly, passionately in love with her.

His name was Horace A. Greer. Probably that was not his real name. It is known that he was also called Joe Kelly. A rather mysterious young fellow. It was said after the tragedy that he was the son of a rich family in the east. He had, however, worked as a chauffeur for Charles Ray and one of the Spauldings.

It was the last day of 1923. Mabel was very ill. She was going to the hospital the next day to be operated on for appendicitis. But after all, New Year's night was New Year's night with Mabel.

Edna Purviance telephoned her to come over to her house on Vermont avenue. "Court" was there. "Court" was Courtland Dines, a young millionaire from Denver who was a Hollywood beau at the moment.

Greer drove her over and left her at the door.

"Come on, you dirty dogs," said Mabel, bursting into Edna's house.

"Step into your dance and let's go somewhere."

Mr. Dines, however, didn't want to go somewhere.

Greer, the chauffeur, went back to Mabel's house. He worked around the house taking down Mabel's Christmas tree. Mabel's secretary and companion telephoned her at Edna's house. She told Mr. Dines, who came to the phone, that Mabel ought to come home; that she was ill and had to go to the hospital the next day. "Oh, it's early yet," said Dines airily; "send over my Christmas package." Mabel had forgotten to bring his present.

The secretary put her hand over the telephone and said to Greer, "He won't let her come home. He won't let her leave the house." Quietly, grimly, Greer said that he would take over Mr. Dines' Christmas present; and went out to the car.

Let Mabel tell the rest of the story:

"Joe," she said (she always called him Joe, although his name was Horace) "came in and he had the Christmas package. I noticed nothing unusual about him. I left the room. I went into Edna's room. She had her evening gown on, but it wasn't hooked up yet. I didn't want the chauffeur to see Edna with her gown unhooked so I went in and said to Edna: 'Say, you dirty dog, where's your powder puff?'"

"Then all of a sudden I heard those terrible things. I thought they were fire crackers. I used to throw fire crackers at Ben Turpin--poor old Ben--all the time at the Sennett Company, until he threatened to quit his job. That's what I thought they were--fire crackers. They were popping all over the house."

But they weren't fire crackers. The young chauffeur had asked Mabel to come home and Dines had sneered at his anxious devotion. Greer had drawn a revolver and fired bullets into Dines until the revolver jammed. Then he drove to the police station and gave himself up.

Dines did not die--but Mabel did. She died a thousand deaths. No one will ever know what she went through. Edna Purviance is a slow, quiet, self-contained girl. She had nothing to say to the reporters, so she escaped. Mabel could not help being good copy. Every reporter who worked on the case adored Mabel and would have strangled himself with his own hands to have helped her, but they just wrecked her.

It just happened to be one of those times when Hollywood was looking for a chance to be shocked. The women's clubs felt like passing resolutions against somebody, so they passed them about Mabel. Why they picked on Mabel is a mystery. It was a furious scandal. Mabel was the only one who was not to blame in any remote way, so naturally she was made the goat. It just about finished her screen career.

About three years ago, Mabel tried another timid venture in pictures. Hal Roach of the Roach Comedies collided with an inspiration. He would bring back some of the old-time stars in his comedies. He signed Theda Bara and Mabel Normand and several others. It was an unfortunate adventure. None of them got to first base. When they got them in the pictures, nobody knew what to do with them. So Mabel surrendered her screen career with a sigh.

Not long after that, Hollywood spilled over the coffee cups in the morning in their astonishment at what they read in the morning paper. Mabel had gone up the coast with a gay automobile party and had come back a married lady. Her husband was her old school mate, Lew Cody--who in "Mickey" had been the villain who pursued her.

Sudden? Yes, it was sudden. But that does not mean it was not a decision well thought out. When Mabel and Lew started on a trip to Ventura with a gay party they apparently had about as much intention of trying to swim to China as they had of being married. But Mabel's decisions are lightning flashes.

Her honeymoon was a characteristically "Mabel" as her bag of peanuts and her ATLANTIC MONTHLY. She didn't like Lew's mansion in Beverly Hills, anyhow, it was too much trouble to move her clothes; so she lived in her house and he lived in his house and occasionally they went to call on each other. Lately, however, they moved in Lew's house.

Much of the time since their marriage, they have been separated by circumstances. Lew went into vaudeville and has been on the road almost continuously. Both he and Mabel have been ill a great deal. One time last winter when she was ill in a hospital in Altadena with her life despaired of, Lew was almost as ill in Chicago. All they could do was send each other telegrams.

They go out very little socially, on account of Mabel's health; but they are most in demand of any married couple in Hollywood. Lew, in fact, is almost a professional dinner guest. I dare say that he is invited to two-thirds of the public banquets given in Hollywood. He is the most brilliant after-dinner speaker I have ever heard. And that goes even for Will Rogers.

Mabel would be a riot socially if she had the slightest interest in it--with her beauty, her charm and her scintillant brains. I would give a good deal to hear Lew and Mabel both going at once as I used to hear them in the old days.

Since her marriage, little has been heard of Mabel. She lives in Beverly Hills, the motion picture suburb of Los Angeles. Sometimes she goes out to parties. She reads a lot, writes a lot, and hides her writings in a locked book.

Twice during the last few years her life has been despaired of. She says it is "just a cold." Her beautiful body is sadly wasted, but her spirit is aflame as ever. She is just as inquisitive, as eager and as keen as ever. But sometimes the Mabel that nobody knows has her hours of sorrow and despair.

I have a letter from Mabel that I treasure dearly because it is a side of Mabel that very few know--the sincere, sorrowful, sweet child underneath the reckless little tomboy who throws fire-crackers at the actors. It reads:

"Dear Harry:

"Somehow or other tonight I am in a very lonely mood, so I am going to write you of something that I have always intended telling you when we should meet, but I have decided that it is very selfish of me to keep it any longer.

"A very dear friend of mine who knows you personally and who has always been one of my most loyal and staunchest friends--something, Harry, that one cannot buy--to who I have gone with my many troubles, because you know unhappiness makes sensitive people cowardly--and whom I have never left without some encouragement and solace..." (She goes on to tell me of a hidden kindness done me by a very eminent lawyer--a kindly deed of which I had never been conscious. She wanted me to know it--that I should ever more deeply appreciate his friendship.)

"You know, Harry," she continues, "there is a mystic power in the ties which friendship throws around the human heart and I am sure he is one of your truest and most loyal friends.

"Shall we call him the judge?--and I will leave you to guess the rest.

"Give my regards to Mrs. Carr and the family and this will be a secret just between you and me and I am happier now than when I began to write this letter.

"Ever your friend,

"Mabel Normand."

I know Mabel--all her faults and her failings and her golden virtues...and her great heart and her great soul--and I am proud of her friendship as I have been proud of the friendship of few men or women.

She is a great actress and a great woman.

\* from *Liberty*, Sept. 6, 1930

**MADCAP MABEL NORMAND -- The True Story of a Great Comedienne**

by Sidney Sutherland -- *who has written for Liberty of many interesting people, from Billie Burke and Lillian Gish to John L. Sullivan and Lou Magnolia. He was a newspaper man for more than twenty years, has been nearly everywhere in the Western hemisphere, was born in Mexico, and lives now on Long Island, N. Y.*

Mabel Normand was not yet thirty-five years old when she died in a hospital on the edge of the southern California desert. The little comedienne struggled long and desperately and in vain against the germs that destroyed her lungs.

She died alone, but not forgotten. In the memories of millions who chuckled as she romped across the screen of her comedies for fifteen hilarious, hectic years, Mabel will ever be an entertaining recollection. Nearly four years had passed since her last appearance before the camera, but so superlative was this hoyden's art that movie magnates and movie fans throughout the world constantly hoped that some day she would emerge from the shadows that obscured her fame and the ailment that brought her down, again to perform her inimitable capers on the screen. Nor was she forgotten by those who, knowing her intimately, were unanimous in loving her. They knew, better than the public, which so often was deluded by the silly unrestraint of press agents and, with equal frequency, was deceived by lurid stories about her celebrated scandals -- they knew that Mabel was a lovely charming, kindly, talented, generous woman whose chiefest enemy was herself.

These memories I am about to write constitute no obsequious account of her career, no unbalance homage to her genius, no propitiatory apology for her undeniable instability of conduct, no attempted extenuation of her sometime truancy from what convention has mapped as the path of strict rectitude.

They are simply a condensed biography, striving to impart with fidelity an informative chronicle of the public and private history of the young woman who, critics and producers generally concede, was unequaled in her role.

Before proceeding with the story of her life, as she herself told it to me in the course of three months I associated with her in Southern California and in New York, it is well to underscore heavily one fact:

Before Mabel's advent into pictures feminine clowns had achieved their laughs by reason of their homeliness, their anatomic angularity or obesity, their grotesque slapstick antics.

You didn't smile at them: you guffawed!

Mabel was the first actress who truly understood the tempo and motive and goal of pantomimic comedy; she was the first beautiful girl who could produce an earthquake of laughter in the darkened theaters of the world before the camera and standing still! She was the first beautiful actress you could smile at and still admire! To this day, so the studio chieftans in Hollywood and New York confide in me, they are praying for not another handsome hero; not another brave cowboy -- but for another Mabel Normand, another comely comedienne who intelligently understands that to be funny is to be natural -- provided you are blessed with a priceless sense of humor.

In Mabel Normand's life are a multitude of laughs, and a sob or two. There are revelations of personal qualities and accomplishments little known to the public which followed her career for the nineteen years that elapsed between her screen debut and her funeral.

In her story there are two or three shadows from which she strode, reasonably unscathed, after tremendous publicity of a harmful character; a paragraph or so about the terrific and successful fight she made to overcome unhappy habits contracted during the earlier, madder days of the picture experiment; and a comprehensive explanation of her unique relationship to the industry which she saw commence in the cradle of the pioneer and grow to its present gigantic adolescence.

For who can doubt that the pictures are, as yet, only on the threshold of their potentialities?

In the late '80s Claude G. Normand, a slender, swarthy, taciturn young Frenchman, frequented the theaters of Providence, Rhode Island. An excellent pianist he, though his temper and indifference to public opinion did not commend him for permanent employment. Yet he might be seen often in the orchestra pit at his favorite instrument, or assisting at rehearsals, or selling tickets. His only love was the theater, until he met Mary Drury.

Mary Drury was a pretty, ebon-haired, gray-eyed Irish girl whose parents, in modest circumstances, had seen to the cultivation of her voice and such schooling as they could afford.

It is interesting to note that her jet eyelashes were so long that when she found it necessary to wear glasses, her vision was troubled because the lashes rubbed against the lenses.

The destiny that fashions strange molds wherein to perform its inscrutable experiments of producing from ordinary mates, rarely beautiful offspring and from seemingly mediocre liaisons the gifts which later are to astonish the world, presently merged into one of the orbits of young Normand and Mary Drury.

[photo caption: An actress in France. Mme. Adrienne, great-grandmother of Mabel Normand]

Where and when and how they met is obscure. It is known that they eloped from Providence and returned after about a year.

Six children were born to them, Mabel told me. Harold, Grace, and Ralph died quite young. Claude, Jr., was born in Providence. Mabel, the future comedienne, was born in New Brighton, on Staten Island, New York. That is, Mabel said, she thought she was born on Staten Island, and she thought the date was November 10, 1895.

She always professed her uncertainty about these two facts -- and she always insisted that neither was very important, anyhow. Her sister Gladys also was born on Staten Island.

Normand had moved his family there when offered a position with the Sailors' Snug Harbor, a great establishment where ancient mariners ended and still end their days.

Later the parents lived in a comfortable home that Mabel built for them in St. Mark's Place, New Brighton. The family has since moved to southern California, scene of Mabel's triumphs and tragedy.

From infancy Mabel Normand possessed the beauty of face and body which was to make her one of the most popular models in the studios of Manhattan, and was to distinguish her as one of the most lovely women the screen has known.

Her eyes were unusually large and dark and set wide apart. The lashes, like her mother's, were more than half an inch in curling length. The nose was small and delicately chiseled. The mouth evoked an approbatory nod from artists for whom she posed.

These artists included Charles Dana Gibson, the Leyendecker brothers, Frank X. and Joseph Christian; C. Coles Phillips, Penrhyn Stanlaws, James Montgomery Flagg, and others presently to be mentioned. To my questioning, many of them responded enthusiastically long afterward about the beauty and charm and wit of the young girl they knew.

The youthful figure was then, as later, extremely slight and graceful. Her feet were small, and even in those early days the toes turned inward toward each other in a laughable manner, as those who knew her in the films so well remember. There was a laugh even in the gesticulation of her small hands, whose little fingers would oddly pull away from their neighbors at an angle of thirty degrees.

And the whole picture of this child I am describing, who in her maturity was five feet one inch tall and weighed ninety-nine pounds was crowned with a heavy mass of fine, purple-black hair.

Two things distinguished Mabel Normand among the countless men and women who knew her  $\frac{3}{4}$  her extraordinary scorn for the conventions and for the opinion of mankind, and her generousities.

Proofs of both will appear in these chapters. And these qualities seem to have had their beginnings in her earliest childhood.

Either she was battling fiercely with her brother Claude, whose bicycle she would steal, no matter how carefully he hid it from her, or she was repeatedly giving away to neighbor children all her possessions. It kept the harried mother busy retrieving these things and refereeing the fights between her progeny.

But whether the Normand household was in funds or not, one article of furniture never was missing from the parlor -- a piano. And there in the Staten Island twilights the moody elder Normand would bring from its often untuned strings all the mad melodies that surged through his bosom.

And there at his knee would crouch his black-haired little daughter, her dark eyes flaming over the thundering chords that crashed out on the ancient keyboard.

It was to the musical education of his daughter that Normand devoted much of his time he was at home; and to the cultivation of her voice and his distracted helpmeet [sic] gave what time she could spare from her conduct of the wild family's destinies.

To this parental attention Mabel owed the excellent musicianship she revealed to her friends in her drawing-room in Beverly Hills.

And until near the end passers-by often paused on Camden Drive in the lovely suburb of Los Angeles where so many picture celebrities live, to listen to the throaty voice of Mabel Normand, rising to the swing of an exquisite ballad or romping madly through a rakish song learned about the ribald studios of Hollywood.

Schooling was something the half-French, half-Irish girl never was to experience. Her mother, between foraging for sustenance, keeping such children as she could at work, and patching and mending, miraculously found time, however, to teach her favorite offspring to read and write.

I say her favorite offspring. I think later incidents reveal the mothers intuitive foresight in the matter of correctly appraising the future money-making talents of her children.

She seems to have sensed, in Mabel's case, that she had mothered in a nest of drab ducklings a swan of beauty who was to cash in to a fabulous extent on her facial and bodily comeliness.

All other textbooks which happened to fall into her hands containing little appeal to the pupil, it was a geography that delighted the restless heart of the little girl. Somewhere Mrs. Normand got hold of a globe and an old Rand McNally geography book.

With these Mabel was content to pass endless hours, tracing with dreamy eye and eager finger tip the paths that led to distant lands and wild exotic life.

In an old dressing room of Miss Normand's in an abandoned Hollywood studio we poked together among the dust-laden debris of the past, and there we found an old globe she bought when she began to work on her most famous film, Mickey.

"I used to run in here from the set and twirl it around while I hurried away to the Klondike, to Madagascar, Paris and Peru," she said as we dusted it off. "And while Nappy -- used to call Mack Sennett Napoleon because it made him feel proud and changed it to Nappy because it made him angry -- while Nappy was dashing wildly around looking for me I'd be strolling through the bazaars of Bombay.

"Nappy would pound on my door and shout: 'Mabel, snap into your dance! The scene's waiting. What the devil are you doing?'

"I'd put on a little mustache and goatee and open the door and say: 'Miss Normand sorry, sir, but she begs inform Mr. Napoleon K. Sennett that she's smoking a camel and riding its mate through the Arabian desert. When she returns she'll hasten to the set. So, off the deep end, Nappy, old beard, till she gets home.'

"Then Nappy'd tear his hair, stamp around, and go back to the studio. There was a short cut from my dressing room and I'd run and beat him back. When he'd arrive he'd find me listening demurely to Dick Jones' suggestions -- Dick directed many of my big pictures.

"When he saw me, he'd throw up both hands, gurgled himself into a fit, and totter off the set. Dick and I would laugh and go with our endless plot to introduce a bit of business in a scene so the handsome hero would get socked. How Dick and I hated handsome leading men!"

But it was with the companionship of geography, not leading men, that the years passed in the Staten Island household. Mabel recalls that she was quite lonely then; that while she knew all about the neighborhood children and divined what they were thinking about, they never really knew her or had any idea what was taking place in the unexplored jungle of her thoughts.

This manifestly set the child apart from childish associations, just as in maturity it raised a barrier few adults ever were permitted to scale.

Presently the girl reached the age when her money-troubled mother deemed her thirteen years as sufficient to bear her share of earning for the needy household. After many conferences, Mabel set off in the autumn of 1908 to make her fortune in the city.

She boarded a ferryboat to carry her to the Battery, clutching her purse with fifty cents and the address of the Butterick Company, where Mrs. Normand had heard young girls could find employment in the pattern-mailing department.

As she leaned over the rail, it is highly improbable that the strange little girl envisioned a future in which fame and popularity and affluence -- and the tragedy of great scandals -- were to play so all-absorbing a role.

When Mabel reached the pattern-mailing room, the clerk to whom she applied for work looked at her a long time. He was a kindly, middle-aged man, and his decision altered her whole history and profoundly affected the history of the movie idea developed a few years before in the brain of Thomas Edison.

"You're too pretty to work in this department," he said. "I'll give you a note to Carl Kleinschmidt in the art department. He draws our delineator covers and he can use a girl like you."

An hour later Kleinschmidt, who had engaged her, was explaining that the pay for models was fifty cents an hour; that the hours were from 9 to 12 A.M. and from 1 to 4 P.M.

He told her that when he couldn't use her, other artists, to whom he would give her a note of introduction, would employ her; that additional money was to be made posing for lantern slides with which popular songs of that era were illustrated, and in working for the commercial photographers.

I asked Mabel Normand to reminisce about her life in the studios, and she groped her strangely forgetful and disjointed way among the pigeonholes of the departed, crowded years.

"The first artist I posed for was Hamilton King," she began. "Kleinschmidt sent me to him, and he used me the first morning to illustrate an advertisement for a new soap shampoo.

"He sent me to Orson Lowell, Henry Hutt, and Penrhyn Stanlaws; and after I had worked for them for several weeks I went up to some lantern-slide offices on Forty-second Street and made a set for them.

"I stood under an artificial peach tree and gazed longingly at a rustic youth who was departing for the city to make a lot of money and then come back to marry me. They paid five dollars for a set of these slides, four to each stanza and a couple for the chorus.

"There was much excitement and gratification in my home when I returned the first day and poured out my account of the delightful new world I had discovered. And, of course, the money I brought was a welcome relief to my mother.

"I made money, too, at the commercial photographers, posing for newspaper and magazine advertisements. There was tremendous variety in this: hats, cold cream, hairbrushes, shoes, stockings, combs, hair tonics, hair nets, veils, gloves, satchels, lingerie, umbrellas, necklaces, frocks, evening wraps, furs, bracelets -- everything the world at large pauses to glance at in that shop window of life known as advertising.

"The pay was on a sliding scale. I'd get a dollar for standing in a tailored suit beside an imitation Pekingese dog and a new bit of luggage; or they'd give me five dollars for a set of twelve plates to be printed in a millinery trade journal. The beauty of this work, and the colored slides, was that I could do it at noon when the artists were at their leisurely luncheons.

"The weeks slid into winter and the snow piled high in the streets; and the studios were places of refuge with their steam-heated warmth or cheery fireplaces. I walked most of the time to save carfare. And I met many famous artists.

"C. Coles Phillips sold one exquisite drawing entitled *The Sand Witch* to the *Saturday Evening Post*. It showed me coiled up on a bathing beach nibbling at a sandwich. The late F. X. Leyendecker and his brother, J. C. used me in countless advertisements. F. X. also selling *The Girl at the Spinning Wheel* to the *Post*.

"Phillips had his studio on Twenty-seventh Street and I used to walk from there to Carnegie Hall on Fifty-seventh and on the way look into the windows and wonder if some day I'd have an automobile like those displayed there. If Charles Dana Gibson had nothing for me, I'd go on up to West 67th St. where James Montgomery Flagg had his studio.

"My meeting with Flagg was a funny one. Henry Hutt phoned him I was coming, and I arrived there in a heavy rain. I put my cheap umbrella in the rack downstairs, successfully passed Flagg's inspection, made an appointment for the following week, grabbed my umbrella, and ran happily down the street. I looked back and Flagg waved his hand at me from the window.

"Then I glanced up and was petrified with horror: I had taken a fine silk umbrella, and the artist had seen me making off with it, I thought. I ran back, switched it for my cheap cotton one, and got away. When I told Flagg about it later he laughed, for of course he hadn't even noticed I had an umbrella. We have been friends ever since.

"Penrhyn Stanlaws' studio was in the Woodward Hotel. He was a demon for color, and one day I thought I'd please him by showing him a little sample of a rose colored dress my mother was going to make for me. He spoiled the whole morning, tossing his hands aloft and raving about the atrocious hue. He frightened me so I've never worn a rose-colored dress to this day.

"Henry Hutt was on the top floor of the Life Building, and he made the most lovely faces I ever saw. He was tireless at the easel, and I used to tug at his cramped legs until the circulation was restored and he could move himself.

"Mr. Gibson was truly a master. How I loved to watch, between poses, as he filled in the outlines of my face or body with his soft warm crayons. I used to touch the picture with my finger tips when he wasn't looking.

"Carnegie Hall was filled with studios, and after I fixed the pose he wanted I would dream for hours as the students throughout the building practiced on their pianos and harps and violins, or ran their vocal scales.

"How sad Mr. Gibson would become when his agent came to take away his completed drawings. Into them he had poured such warmth and love that we felt like crying when the editor's messenger would call.

"Well, Mabel, Mr. Gibson would sigh, 'if we don't sell them you don't get paid for posing and I don't eat. Now, let's try this position, my dear.'

"He was so kind, always nodding when he saw me weary with the pose. And one day he detected me in the midst of a theft! I had on a marvelous creation, a foamy, filmy evening gown covered with silver rosebuds. My mother had made a little black felt hat for me, and I wondered how a wreath of the silver buds would look around its brim.

"One way we models would rest, without letting the artist know, was to move a hand, for instance, that wasn't in the pose. And quite unconsciously I began to tug at the little rosebuds.



"I was so wrapped up in the vision of their effect when I twined my cheap hat that I never noticed Mr. Gibson had left his easel and walked around behind me to see why I was wriggling.

"When he saw what I was doing and he followed my gaze to my hat where I had tossed it on a chair, he smiled gently, startled me by patting my shoulder, and told me to help myself to all the little rosebuds I wanted because he was not going to use the gown any more.

"I think I cried a bit, when he continued to pat my arm and murmur his understanding of a young girl's heart.

"I made many acquaintances among the other models, some of whom became lifelong friends, such as Alice Joyce, Justine Johnson, and Anna Q. Nilsson. What lovely girls they were -- Alice with her placid, wide, dark eyes; Justine, with a wealth of taffy-colored hair and matchless skin; and Anna, as regal and blondly fascinating as a viking's daughter.

"We four were favorites with the artists, because among us almost every type and shading of feminine beauty could be found.

"I don't believe any of the girls who posed regularly for the men I've mentioned ever were subjected to the treatment popular opinion attaches to life in the studios. I know everybody was nice to me.

"The better artists never had the time or inclination to misbehave, and since they looked on their models as a stock fancier looks on a prize animal, they had little patience with a girl who dissipated.

"It seems obvious to me that if a girl, especially at the ages at which we were working back in 1908 and 1909 -- the eldest of us not yet twenty years old -- really became notorious, she wouldn't have lasted long before the easels.

"A model's face must be extremely pliable; that is, the artists want them to get the spirit of the pose into their features, and if they want a joyous morning face it's a sure thing they don't want a model showing up with a dead pan and morning after eyes.

"I don't know when it was, but I imagine it must have been about the time I was fifteen years old, in November, 1910, that I began to miss Alice Joyce around the studios and photographers' and song-slide offices. Somebody told me she had gone into the movies.

"A little later I saw her at Eddowes, a great commercial photography studio, where she'd come in to pick up a few dollars, and she was quite excited about the new job she had with Kalem's movie company.

"Of course, I'd been a movie fan all my life, stealing a few nickels from my luncheon money to go to the funny little theaters of those days when there was no work in the studios.

"I loved Florence Turner and Mary Fuller, but every fiber in my body responded to Flora Finch's celebrated comedies; and though I was quite unconscious of it, I can see now that I was always wondering how I would do the funny little stunts she did in her pictures. And, quite likely, figuring my way would be better!

"It was Frank Lanning who really sent me into motion pictures, I guess. He had gone into them, and I had met him around the artist's studios where he posed as an Indian for railway folders and calendars. He said he was working for D. W. Griffith at the Biograph studio at Eleven East Fourteenth St, and urged me to go down there and ask Griffith for work.

"Something inside me tugged strongly at my heart, whispering that Lanning's counsel was good. But I was afraid of mother, and a little afraid I might not make good before the camera. Orson Lowell added his advice to Lanning's.

"'You see, Mabel,' this clever artist for Life said one day, 'all the funny women in pictures today get their laughs by being awkward, by being homely, and by getting kicked when they stooped over. Now, why shouldn't real beauty such as yours and an unquenchable spirit and genuine spontaneity go big on the screen? Why not give it a whirl? You can always come back to the artists if you don't like it.'

"Another thing that made me hesitate was that I thought I'd liked to be an artist. The men I worked for helped me, and while of course I've never done anything with it, I learned enough about painting to do vignettes today in my own books and the books of my friends out here, and to do water colors on the programs and guest cards for my friends when they give parties.

"But I took the great plunge one day. I got on a street car after I left Mr. Gibson's office and alighted in Union Square. I asked the first man I met at Eleven East Fourteenth St. for a job. He sent me to Wilfred Lucas, Griffith's right-hand man. Lucas talked to me a while and then nodded his head, sending me to the wardrobe mistress, Ada Ebling, whose quarters were in the basement.

"A little later I was dressed as a page and was holding up the long train of a noblewoman. My silk-clad legs embarrassed me, and while I was rehearsing I noticed a stocky, red-faced Irishman leaning against the wall, looking at me and grinning.

"I was worried because for all I knew he might have been Griffith, and I instinctively knew my role didn't call for a laugh.

"But when Lucas yelled through his megaphone, I forgot the grinning Irishman and snapped into my part. I remembered his face, though, and years later I made a tremendous fortune for that Irishman. His name was, and is, Mack Sennett.

"After what seemed to me only a couple of minutes, so excited was I over the confusion and thrills of the movie studio and the strange people in it, somebody blew a whistle, the lights were switched off, and somebody else said it was lunchtime. After trying nervously to eat a sandwich, I went back upstairs to work in another short picture.

"When four o'clock came, the time I usually quit work, Lucas explained we were to work late and that my pay was five dollars as an extra, but that I'd get two-fifty if we went on till nine, and if we worked after that two-fifty more. That was more than I'd ever made in a day, and I was doing the one thing on earth I wanted to do!

"We quit at eleven o'clock that night; and I began to worry as I hurried into the subway, clutching my ten dollars. I found my mother waiting grimly for me when I reached home, and after listening to my excited account of the day's adventure, she took the ten dollars and forbade me to return to Biograph!"<sup>229</sup>

"Disconsolate, I obeyed and returned to the artists' studios, until about three weeks later I happened to run into Mack Sennett, Henry B. Walthall, and Dell Henderson in Times Square. Sennett scolded me for deserting Griffith and said I'd have to go back and 'kill the scene' explaining that while I had carried the noblewoman's train out I hadn't appeared with her entering the next room.

"So, in spite of the scolding I knew I'd get at home, I determined once and for all to go into moving pictures. We returned together to Fourteenth St., and I killed the scene, and a lot of others during the following weeks. My mother gave in when she saw it was useless to oppose.

"It was Griffith's practice to escape the leaden winter skies of Manhattan by taking the company to Hollywood from Christmas until May. He told me he would not want me and suggested I ask Vitagraph for a job over in the Flatbush studios.

"Sennett, seeing how unhappy I was over being left behind, told me he'd look me up when they returned and would have something interesting to talk to me about in the way of working for a new company for which he was going to direct comedies.

"Vitagraph put me on steady at thirty dollars a week. I made 'Betty Becomes a Maid' with Leo Delaney, and met dozens of famous persons. And there I found one of my idols, Norma Talmadge. I shall be happy to pay her and our friendship, that began in 1911, a golden tribute when I come to discuss what you call one of the 'shadows' of my life, the mysterious murder of my friend, William Desmond Taylor.

"Of course, I met the great John Bunny and the celebrated Flora Finch.

"Bunny, poor clown, died too early in his picture career; and Flora had that tragic thing happen to her which has happened to so many in our profession -- the heartbreak of seeing somebody displace you in the esteem of the capricious public."<sup>230</sup>

"Among the Vitagraph directors was an eccentric duck named Thompson. When things went wrong he would jerk off the derby he invariably wore, hurl it to the ground, and jump on it.

"Although it endangered my budding career, I couldn't resist the impulse to do things purposely wrong just to see him attack his bowler. I must have bulled the Brooklyn market in derby hats, for he certainly wrecked a lot of them when I was working for him.

"To recite the names of the actors and actresses who worked for Vitagraph is almost to catalogue the industry in its early, glorious, funny days. Among them were Florence Turner, William Quirk, Virginia Pearson, Naomi Childers, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Drew, Norma and Constance Talmadge, Ralph Ince, Rose Tapley, Florence Lawrence, Wallace Reid, Anita Stewart, Antonio Moreno, Earle Williams, Clara Kimball Young and her husband, Jimmy Young.

"Also there were Mary Fuller, Edith Storey, Leah Baird, Rosemary Theby, Pat Hartigan, Arline Pretty, Larry Semon, Joseph Kilgour, Violet Heming, Ruby DeRemer, Marc McDermott, Louis Mann, Cissy Fitzgerald, Marshall P. Wilder, Alice Lake, Rankin Drew, Lottie Pickford, William Desmond, Grace Darmond, and Barney Bernard.

"I attended my first party, as they are now called, while working for Vitagraph. Some celebrated artist had done Lillian Walker in a full-length oil painting, and Dimples, as we called her, invited us over to take a look.

"I told mother I was working late that night and borrowed the extra pay from Constance Talmadge who, in her deceiving turn, told Peg, as she and Norma call their darling mother, that my mother was sick and needed a loan.

"When I think now how diabolical we girls felt that night with the case of iced beer somebody brought and the sandwiches Dimples provided, I have to laugh at our youth and genuine innocence and ignorance of what the future was to hold for all of us."

\* from *Liberty*, September 13, 1930

#### **Part Two -- In The Movie Money**

"D. W. Griffith gave me a job when he brought the company back to New York from California in May 1911," said Mabel Normand, continuing the story of her career. "And he changed my screen name back to my real one. Vitagraph had identified the actors on the screen, but for a while Biograph, Mr. Griffith's company, gave its players funny names.

"Blanche Sweet was Daphne Wayne, I was Muriel Fortescue, and Mack Sennett had some trick moniker like Lionel Marchbank. As a matter of fact, his original name is Michael Sinnott and he is Irish-Canadian. He came to this country via Detroit, where he was a boiler maker. Perhaps that accounts for his broad shoulders and enormous strength.

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<sup>229</sup> It is a bit puzzling exactly what this film was that Mabel first appeared in. In two earlier interviews she states concerning this film that "I don't remember the name of the picture - all I recall is that the wonderful creature I had seen was a blind sculptress" (*New York Morning Telegraph*, November 24, 1918) and "I forget the name of the picture, but Florence Lawrence and Marion Leonard and Dell Henderson and Henry Walthall were the principals" (*Photoplay*, August 1918.) Unfortunately, a close examination of the list of Biograph films (contained in *D. W. Griffith and the Biograph Company*, by Graham C. Cooper, et. al.) covering this period yields no film that fits this description. For one thing, Florence Lawrence left Biograph for Imp prior to the time Mabel might have made her film debut. Also, there is no Biograph film made between 1909 and 1912 which has in its cast Walthall, Leonard and Henderson all at once, though all three were with the company at that time. It might seem to be implied that Wilfred Lucas directed the film, but Lucas did not direct any Biograph films during this period. The most likely person to have directed the film would have been Griffith or Frank Powell. It is difficult then to know what to make of this story that, incidentally, is repeated in Sennett's *King of Comedy*.

<sup>230</sup> Bunny, along with Augustus Carney and Billy Quirk, one of the very first of the great American film comedians. He died of a combination of Brights disease and over exertion in April 1915, after a very successful publicity tour of many major American cities. With his passing, Flora Finch was simply lost without him as her co-star - or at least so the public apparently seemed to think - and her popularity declined. The "someone" perhaps alleged to as displacing Mabel herself in the public's esteem, is apparently Clara Bow.

"The story of how Griffith gave him a job as property-man's assistant, and then used him in comedies is well known. So with his career as the greatest director of comedies the world has ever seen.

"I don't know when it was, but I worked with Blanche Sweet in *The Eternal Mother*, and with Mary Pickford in *The Mender of Nets*. Mary is one of the best friends I have. Among others I met at Biograph was Jeanie MacPherson, later one of the screen's finest writers.

"I must have stayed with Griffith's company about a year, because late in the spring of 1912, when I was in my seventeenth year, Mack Sennett took me to Luchow's cafe on Fourteenth Street for luncheon.

"He explained in great detail that he signed a contract with Bauman and Kessel, who ran the New York Motion Picture Company, and was to make comedies for them in Hollywood. He said he wanted me to sign up with them.

"An hour later he escorted me into the office of his new bosses. They put me in a big chair and my feet didn't reach the floor. One ought to have one's feet on the ground always when talking contracts! Facing me were the owners and Sennett and a private secretary -- and how those babies teamed up on me!

"First Bauman offered me \$75 a week. I just sat and stared at him. Then Kessel said they'd star me in every picture. Then Nappy -- you know how I called Sennett Napoleon and then abbreviated it -- he told me to get down to earth and listen to reason.

"When I didn't reply, Bauman made it \$100 a week, and that left me dumber than before. There wasn't that much money in the world! Why, after a year -- with \$5,200 -- I could retire and keep my family in luxury forever! They misinterpreted my silence, and with a hollow groan Bauman flung up his hands and said \$125.

"By the time he'd stated that figure the idea of \$100 had finished, percolating through the old brain and I reached for the pen and signed the contract.

"My family wouldn't believe it until they saw the first week's pay.

"Keystone comedies cranked its camera for the first time in its historic, never-equalled career on the morning of July 4, 1912, when we began a picture in Central Park. Leave it to Nappy to find a location that was gratis!

"Within ten days we all went out to Hollywood. There weren't many of us, and only a few were known to the public at all, and we didn't know what the future held for us out on those faraway, sun-kissed slopes.

"But we didn't care. We were a jolly outfit of friendly comedians, and we were going to make the world laugh, and I was to get \$125 a week and be a star. Oh, the gay years when I went tripping down the road in the crystal sunshine! I often think a marvelous story could be written about the early days of the baby industry out here in California.

"From the capitalists and producers at the top who were guessing as to what the public would like in this brand-new amusement, to the inventors who were swiftly devising new things for both camera and projection machine and electrical lighting and laboratory development, on down to the wild crowd of young men and women who formed the first companies making pictures, the whole thing was a gamble.

"We were a feverish, groping, guessing, suddenly enriched throng of youthful people who didn't know what to do while we were working and didn't know or care what we did while we were playing.

"Remember: the camera is an insatiable Minotaur demanding youth and beauty. That is all it requires. Brains can be supplied by scenario writers and dialogists and directors -- if they have any. And youth and beauty seldom are escorted through life by common sense or stability of character, since the law of compensation declines to shower on one individual all the qualities with which the myths endowed the ancient gods.

"So, you may be sure, the inevitable happened -- lovely girls and handsome lads, both young and often uneducated, suddenly were deluged with gold, and a lot of us flung prudence and conservatism and thrift and restraint to the soft breezes of the Pacific Ocean and frolicked madly through the early days of our careers.

"It got some of us, and some of us died notoriously; others it dropped swiftly out of the pictures; and a few of us finally got our feet back on firm ground and survived.

"Well, we made the world laugh, all right, as it has never laughed before or since; and some weeks I actually got the \$125 they promised. Often, though, I didn't, and the reason is one of the first of a million laughs I've got out of my career in the films.

"You wouldn't think, would you, that the speed of a selling plater on the race tracks back east would have anything to do with the salary due to the great Normand, star of Keystone, out in California? But it had a lot to do with it, for Bauman and Kessel backed a book at the tracks, and when the ponies scampered in wrong, little Mabel didn't get her \$125 a week. But, of course, they always paid me in full eventually.

"The new amusement of the movies accounted for another quaint feature in connection with the work of all of the companies in Hollywood. Most of the pictures in those days were one or two reelers, and each company would be making as many as six at once, simply because the producers back east would run short of money and wire their directors that they could borrow in advance from the film exchanges and exhibitors if they got a wire that another picture was being made.

"So we, like other companies, would stop in the middle of one and start another, simply rearranging the props, pulling a pair of overalls on over my frock, putting a cop's cap on Fatty Arbuckle, and having Ford Sterling or Charlie Chaplin chase us around in front of the camera.

"There'd be no script, no plot, no idea of what we'd do when we started -- and no title. All we needed was 600 or 700 feet of film showing us doing something and 300 or 400 feet of educational film to tack on it, such as how sheep are sheared or olives canned.

"Then Nappy'd wire B. and K. that Mabel's New Lover, or some other fancy title, was on the way east, and B. and K. could arrange for new funds.

"There was still another weird phase to my work. I guess there were more companies named after me than any other actress that ever lived.

"There'd be a Mabel Normand Amusement Co., Inc., and a Mabel Normand this, and a Mabel Normand that. All of these companies were organized without my knowing anything about them, and caring less.

"In some mysterious way, too occult for me to fathom, they'd raise money on these interminable companies, put some of it into three or four pictures, and then let the company die and form another and raise more

money. It was all perfectly legitimate and ethical. It simply meant that nobody knew much about the new game of moving pictures.

"All this brought a strange fact into our industry. I made more pictures than any five actresses or actors that ever performed. And I made more millionaires of men I never saw than anybody ever in pictures. Certainly, I don't begrudge them a dime.

"I made plenty, and I saved plenty, and I have plenty today -- plenty meaning that if I never work again I can continue to live on the scale to which I've accustomed myself. Nobody else accustomed me to it!

"And to give you a sidelight on another angle of our early history: I had nobody to tell me what to do. Dramatic actresses had the stage to fall back on, the sure-fire hits of theatrical history in pose and facial expression; but I had to do something that nobody had ever done before.

"I had no precedent, nothing to imitate, for Flora Finch's art, based as it was on her angularity and candidly exploited homeliness, never would have fitted me. Other comedienne with equal frankness got their laughs with their fat bodies or their somewhat ghastly grotesquery of gesture.

"Since all previous laughs had been achieved through the spoken word and, in our early days, through slapstick hokey, I had to cleave a new path to laughter through the wilderness of the industry's ignorance and inexperience. I created my own standard of fun, simply letting spontaneity and my inborn sense of what is mirth-provoking guide me, for no director ever taught me a thing.

"I wasn't satisfied with merely being kicked, though I've been kicked oftener and more heartily than any woman who ever lived. But while I was getting kicked or bowled over, it was because somebody else wanted to get a laugh and got it at my expense.

"Well, I didn't mind; there were enough laughs to go around -- and nobody ever stole a picture from me! And most of the kickers are in oblivion.<sup>231</sup>

"Our first studio was an old grocery store Bauman and Kessel bought at 1712 Alessandro St., now called Glendale Boulevard, in the Los Angeles suburb of Edendale. To this diminutive studio others were added, until ownership of that old lot put Sennett, who acquired it through numerous transactions, among the richest producers in the business.

"One of the first men Sennett hired was Harry Carr, later a director of the Los Angeles Times. He came to us as a press agent, and it was he who conceived the idea of the famous Sennett bathing beauties, one day after Nappy had bawled him out about failing to get him enough publicity.

"We had a lot of fun with Ince's company. Sennett's company was a member of the Triangle Corporation, and through the latter Griffith and Thomas Ince also released. Inceville was a few miles north of Santa Monica, on the beach and bluffs and mesa back of the hills.

"A famous spot in our day was the Twin Rocks, huge boulders that stood, barnacle covered, at the edge of the water. There Keystone staged some of our celebrated comedies, the bathing beauties being imperiled by villains and rescued by the Keystone cops and the heroes all over and around the rocks.

"Ince would get all set for one of his mammoth panorama pictures with cameras mounted everywhere. Long companies of pioneer families would pass in wagons from the mesa down the ravines and along the beach, and Indians would attack and cavalry come dashing up to save them.

"Sennett would have us waiting, and at the most spectacular climax of the great panorama he'd give a signal and we'd dash out and do our stuff against that mighty background. There'd be no connection between our comedy and the drama, but that made no difference. Ince would see us and come running, screaming through his megaphone:

"Mack, you damned thief! Get those infernal clowns off my set!"

"We'd beat it, of course, but we had our scenes. Tom and Mack wouldn't speak for a couple of days, but of course they were devoted friends and laughed about it afterward.

"We had lots of fun at the home of Ince and his lovely wife, Nell. Nappy used to have trouble with his correspondence and I helped him out. I got him to install a dictaphone, and also used it to jot down any funny ideas that came to us on the set. Nell Ince had a fine phonograph, and that gave me a hunch.

"I prepared some special cylinders for our dictaphone, telling interesting things about the studio, so we could entertain visitors, and wound them up by saying, 'Miss Mabel Normand will now sing the Jewel Song from Faust,' or the aria from Tosca or La Boheme, or whatever I thought of. Another record would finish with the statement that 'Mr. Mack Sennett will now sing his favorite, Celeste Aida,' or Mother Machree, or something else.

"The Inces were hosts in their day to some of the most celebrated people in the world, and when somebody especially famous was there Nell would phone and invite us to dinner, and after dinner we'd gather on the veranda.

"We'd put on our record, and hidden back of a potted fern or a screen would be the Ince phonograph. When it had been announced that Miss Normand was to sing, somebody would turn on the phonograph and the celebrities would sit dumbfounded while they listened to my marvelous voice -- which was Mary Garden's or Lina Cavalieri's.

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<sup>231</sup> Although Fred Mace was among the founding and most prominent early stars at Keystone, little if any mention of him was made by either Mabel or Sennett in their respective "autobiographies." The apparent reason for this was perhaps the nature of his Mace's death. In March 1917 (see *Motography* March 10, 1917), he was found dead in his Hotel Astor apartment in New York reportedly of apoplexy, but later suggested to be suicide. This unexpected event, and his meteoric fall in general, perhaps accounts for Mabel and Sennett's reticence.

With ideas of doing as well as Sennett had done for himself, Mace's set out upon an independent career in April 1913. What ensued was all manner of setback and misfortune, including, in one instance, the accidental death of the main co-star of his revived "One Round O'Brien" effort. Sennett, in 1915, afterward very graciously took him back, and he starred again with Mabel in the Triangle demi-feature *My Valet*. His career however, for reasons really not all that clear, continued on a pronounced downward spiral. Although he has been largely overlooked by film comedy historians, he, nonetheless, had his moments, and could bring a warm jollity and understated zaniness to the occasion; such as we see in shorts like *Helen's Marriage* (Biograph) and *The Bangville Police* (Keystone). It was he, by the bye, who first directed Arbuckle and Minta Durfee to seek work at the Keystone company. At present, probably the best biography available on Mace is that contained in Kalton Lahue's *Mack Sennett's Keystone*.

"Then I would simper and blush when they demanded I sing then and there, and explain that I had a slight cold and dared not strain my golden throat.

"And the lovely tenor of Mr. Mack Sennett would drift through the honeysuckle and across the lawn with its giant trees -- while Nappy would become self-conscious and modest as Caruso or John McCormack warbled for him.

"Gouverneur Morris, or Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, or whoever was there, would rave about us and scold us for being in pictures when we ought to be in opera. Sometimes we let them in on the joke, but we didn't tell Bill Hart, and he used to come to the studio for a year after, begging Sennett and me to sing for him.

"We had some great characters working on that old Keystone lot. Among those who made good Charlie Chaplin, Ben Turpin, Phyllis Haver, Louise Fazenda, Polly Moran, Ford Sterling, Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle, Chester Conklin, Marie Dressler, Gloria Swanson, Wallace Beery, Marie Prevost, and numerous others. But many stars of the speaking stage failed.

"Pop [Al] Levy's cafe at Fourth and Spring streets was the favorite meeting place of the screen personalities in the early days. Charlie Murray, Vera Reynolds, and Julia Faye of our studio often joined Nappy and me at luncheon or dinner there to discuss bits of business or just gossip. Wally Reid often was with us; and he, poor fellow, never was to emerge from the shadow into which his light and care-free feet carried him.

"It was at Levy's that Sennett had a great laugh at my expense. I told him one night I wasn't hungry but would take a drink of something. He ordered a horse's neck, and I turned to Lottie Pickford and Clarine Seymour and Teddy Sampson, who were with us.

"Can you imagine this mick trying to feed me a chunk of old dobbin when I told him I wasn't hungry!' I said. They all got a great laugh out of that.

"Dorothy Gish and Constance Talmadge and Blanche Sweet were not with our company, but we four were inseparable at one time. We had a funny bet we settled every night. We were all insatiable movie fans and went to a theater every evening.

"We'd bet sodas for the quartet and the last one to cry during the running of a picture would have to pay. I got stuck a lot at first, because most emotional acting gave me a laugh; but before long I learned a trick so I never was the loser. It worried the three girls for quite a while, but they finally caught me.

"On the way to the theater I would buy an afternoon paper, clip out the death notices, and when the rest weren't looking and the lights were on between reels I'd glance down the column of lamentations by the relicts [sic] and burst into tears.

"A famous member of our company was Pepper, a fat cat Sennett was crazy about. She was more than a cat: she was a barometer. Pepper would curl up near the gate and we'd all hide behind props and buildings till Sennett came in.

"If he stalked past his pet, squirting tobacco juice furiously ahead, we'd snap into our dance, for we knew he was in bad temper. But if he stooped and scratched Pepper's ears and said 'Good morning' to her, then the great Normand was in for a warm siege.

"I either had to go to Sennett with some troublesome somebody wanted squared or with the suggestion that Ford Sterling would do better work if he got ten dollars more a week. Pepper and I got several raises for Fatty Arbuckle and Charlie Chaplin.

"One day, early in the spring of 1914, I think it was, Nappy and I were standing at the head of the stairs near his office quarreling about something -- we were eternally wrangling. Suddenly the door opened and a huge blob of a man appeared below. He was the fattest thing I'd ever seen, and he had the jolliest face and eyes.

"He advanced heavily up the stairs, followed by a sad-looking yellow bull terrier that answered to his obese master's call of Luke. When he reached us he stopped and took of his hat, and spoke:

"My name's Roscoe Arbuckle, but they call me Fatty. I'm the fat laugh in the Long Beach Stock Company, but I want to get into the movies. If you think I'm not good, watch --'

"Whereupon he leaped backward into space, sailing surprisingly high in the air for so vast a man, cleared Luke by a couple of feet, and landed at the foot of the stairway on the back of his neck. The whole building shook, and Nappy and I clutched each other. But Arbuckle bounced lightly to his feet and ran back up to us. Sennett hired him at once at fifty dollars a week.

"Fatty and I played in countless pictures together. They didn't make much sense but they were surpassingly funny. Arbuckle ran into a lot of hard luck in San Francisco and the public turned on him and hounded him out of pictures.

"After we'd been in California a year or so, Nappy succumbed to the fever then afflicting the producers, the belief that you can take a celebrity in some field and make him or her a great box-office magnet in the films.

"Well, you can't, any more than a magazine could feed its readers with articles on biology from the pen of Thomas Edison or poetry written by Battling Nelson. You can kid the public just so long, and then it demands reality instead of the counterfeit.

"The actors and actresses from the stage came in droves to Hollywood and to our studio and they departed almost as fast as they came. I liked Lew Fields immensely, and he used to come with tears in his eyes, and say: 'Mabel, what's wrong with me? I ain't kidding myself. I know I'm ghastly.'

"I tried to explain that in his case it was a matter of spacing his stuff so that slower-witted audiences could keep up with him. But it was hopeless.

"Once Raymond Hitchcock and Sam Bernard were watching me in a take, and in it somebody had to throw a heavy cowboy boot from the side across the scene and hit a handsome hero at my right. Just as the boot came flying along, I happened to look down at my feet and the heel took me smartly back of the left ear.

"I went down cold, and came to a little later, just as Sam was saying to Hitchy: 'Too bad Fields wasn't here to see her space that one!'

"In one play Hitchy appeared in with me he played opposite a lot of snakes, and he called them Alpha and Omega and Upsilon and Eenie and Meenie and Miny and Moe, because he said he wasn't sure of their sex and those names were sexless. I don't know whether the horrid things actually understood him, but they did seem to come to him when he called them by those names.

"Polly Moran and Wallace Beery played for a year in Sheriff Nell, a series of comical western pictures Sennett conceived. Beery got his chance when he happened to stumble and fall while acting as a prop boy. He and Gloria Swanson came to us at the same time.

"Gloria got past the gateman some way and walked up to Sennett and told him she had worked for the Essanay in Chicago and wanted a job with him. He sent her to the wardrobe to put on a bathing suit, and when she reappeared she was so lovely and fragile and so charming and so graceful that he hired her at once.

"But instead of returning on the day he told her to, she showed up a couple of days later and explained that on the strength of the new job she had married Wallace Beery, and begged Sennett to put him to work.<sup>232</sup>

"It was about August of 1913, after we'd been there a year, that a thing of vast importance to the industry happened. Charlie Chaplin came to work for us. He was appearing in a Los Angeles theater in a sketch called A Night in a London Music Hall.

"Somebody told Sennett he was good, and Mack asked me to go with him to have a look. After it was over, he asked me what I thought, adding that he doubted if the little Englishman would do for pictures.

"I like him," I told Mack. "He needs movie technique, but he's got the stuff, gobs of funny stuff. Let's get a close-up. Send him a note."

"Chaplin met us under the arc lights in front of the theater. He had on a little pin-check suit, all wrinkled, and an iron derby, and his linen was frayed and soiled. He spoke in low tones and seemed ill at ease and discouraged. We talked to him a while, and Mack asked him if he'd like to go into films. Charlie said he didn't know, and seemed pretty vague. Sennett told him to come out the next day and take a test.

"The next morning Chaplin got off a street car near the studio and came over. I took him to my dressing room, and helped him make up, and tried to put a little confidence into him. I liked him. Something about each of us must have stirred an answering streak of loneliness in the other -- for Charlie Chaplin and I have often been alone, felt alone, when surrounded by the thickest crowds.

"When he was ready, Charlie asked Nappy what he wanted done, and the latter told him to go through some of his business in his regular act. Charlie shrugged his thin little shoulders and did his stuff. It was pretty sad, of course, because it was his first time, but I was convinced that beneath that amateurish exterior, that dejected surface, behind those somber eyes, lay mines of matchless fun.

"We three loitered around a bit and then went to the projection room to see the rushes. Nobody laughed, and I could feel Charlie shrinking even smaller as he sat beside me in the darkness. When the lights came on, Nappy asked him what he was getting then, and Chaplin said eighteen dollars a week.

"Well," said Sennett, "you've got a lot to learn; but if you want to try it I'll give you fifty a week."

"Chaplin caught his breath, thought a while, and asked if Mack would sign a three months' contract. Sennett indignantly said he wouldn't and stalked away, and Charlie sorrowfully took a street car back to town.

"A week or so later Billy Reeves and the rest of the troupe in Charlie's English sketch reached San Francisco, and Charlie went to see a fortune teller. He is a very superstitious chap, is Charlie.

"The woman told him a lot of stuff, and wound it up by saying: 'You've just had an offer to change your job. Be sure to take it, for that way lie fame and fortune beyond your wildest dreams.'

"This made Chaplin very unhappy, so he wrote us asking if the job was still open at seventy-five dollars and a three month's contract. I ran across the letter a week or so later and scolded Nappy for not showing it to me. After some delay he wrote Chaplin in Denver, offering him seventy-five dollars a week and a three month's contract.

"Billy Reeves told me later what Charlie said when he got the letter. He took it to Billy and asked him if he thought the movie industry was solid enough to pay such a sum and if Sennett was good for it. Reeves laughed and said yes. Then Charlie got a piece of paper and figured out his future this way:

"If Sennett pays me seventy-five dollars for thirteen weeks, that will be \$975. Of course, as a movie actor I'll have to raise my standard of living far above my present style. I noticed that crowd spends money on clothes and food and good times. Well, Billy, suppose I do spread myself extravagantly and spend as much as ten dollars a week for thirteen weeks, that will leave me \$845 profit, or nearly 170 pounds sterling.

"Billy, if I return to England with that much money I can live for the rest of my life without having to work again. It's like a dream, but I'm going to take a chance. I may never get such a golden opportunity again."

"Charlie left the show and came out to us, and we began a friendship that has never wavered or weakened in the lights or in the shadows that have come to darken both our lives.

"Chaplin's first picture was called Auto Races,<sup>233</sup> and it was also another evidence of Nappy's thrifty soul at work, for we took advantage of a great crowd out to see Barney Oldfield in a race.

"I carried a tray of hot dogs, and Charlie's first role in pictures was that of a little bum who stole my hot dogs. It was fairly funny, and I battled Sennett all over the lot when he screamed that he had hooked himself up with a dead one at seventy-five dollars a week for three months.

"Then I decided to help my new friend. In my little dressing room I had a kerosene stove that autumn and winter, and long after everybody had left the studio, Charlie and I would sit there and talk.

"What a lovely memory it is! How the great genius of today crept, humble and discouraged, into my bungalow and told me his dreams and listened to mine; how we planned bits of business and little mannerism's; how he decided to develop the queer shuffling little walk of an old coster-monger he once saw in Whitechapel -- the famous Chaplin walk with the big shoes and little skip and hop when he turned aside.

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<sup>232</sup> It was Beery who, in 1916, was actually first hired by Sennett, and Swanson, already then his wife, who was, just incidentally, hired along with him. Yet it was Gloria, of course, who, of the two, became a big success at Keystone. Perhaps the "begged" referred to here, took place after Swanson's star had risen and Beery's had suffered a setback.

<sup>233</sup> Chaplin's first film in which he appeared in his tramp costume (his actual first film being *Making a Living* in which he wears non-tramp garb) has traditionally been thought to be *Kid Auto Races*, which Mabel did not appear in. David Robinson in his Chaplin biography, however, makes a very good argument that *Mabel's Strange Predicament* was actually his first tramp film. Finally, the film to which she refers to here, in which her character has some hot dogs stolen from her, is neither *Races* or *Predicament*, but rather *Mabel's Busy Day* -- though the setting in that short is the auto race-track also.

"Nappy turned him over to me and I directed several of his pictures, in some of which I also played. And while it would be folly and untrue for me to say I am responsible for very much of his present standing as the screen artist beyond compare, yet I'm proud to say that he held my hand while he found his way through the swamp of learning the game. That Charlie is prompt to acknowledge the strength he found in my arm is one of the happy spots in my life.

"Life -- before the shadows came to both of us -- was one long riot of laughter for Charlie Chaplin and Mabel Normand in those glorious days. Studio automobiles were scarce, but when Chaplin or I got tired of working we'd wink at each other, sneak off the set when Sennett's back was turned, beat it out to where the cars were parked, and climb into a big touring car with the top down. The drivers loved me and risked Nappy's wrath to take me for a ride.

"With our make-up on we'd start for Los Angeles. At the first crowded corner, with everybody in other machines, in street cars, and along curbs staring at us, we'd do our stuff.

"With a terrifying scream Charlie would leap to his feet, wave his arms, make the most hideous face, and tremble like St. Vitus. Everybody start nervously and stare at us.

"Then I'd reach up, pull him down, and press his head to my bosom, holding up my hand for silence.

"It's just my poor husband,' I'd explain, the tears running down my cheeks. 'He's completely crazy and escaped yesterday from the asylum. I'm taking him back there now.'

"Then everybody would look sympathetic and whisper to each other and ask me if they couldn't do something for me.

"At the next corner it would be my turn, and I would utter a piercing shriek, stiffen out on the back seat of the car, roll my eyes, waggle my fingers in front of my open mouth, and look exactly like a nut.

"Charlie would put one hand on my head to quiet me, stand erect, gaze pitifully around, and tap his forehead.

"My poor wife!' he'd exclaim. 'My poor wife, completely off her trolley, and I'm taking her to the asylum at Patton.'

"Again every onlooker would shake his head and murmur condolences and offer to do something for Charlie, but he'd merely cover his face and sob aloud."

\* from *Liberty*, September 20, 1930

#### **Part Three -- Mickey and Maeterlinck**

"Not long after Charlie came to Keystone studio Fatty Arbuckle joined us. I wonder if three such clowns will ever again be together in a picture. I don't know how many of those old one and two reelers we three made, but we turned them out by the scores -- three clowns, each of whom was to walk through the shadows in the years to come.

"We made the world laugh as it never has laughed before or since; there were countless millions of men and women and children who loved us in our pictures -- and all three of us have felt our own salt tears upon our lips.

"Well, they seem always to have gone together -- laughter and tears. Charlie's funny feet and grief laden eyes -- laughter and tears. Mabel's waggish eyebrows and her quivering upper lip -- a laugh and a tear. Fatty's grotesque bulk and his breast heaving with sighs because the heroine loved a slimmer and handsomer man -- a guffaw and a tear.

"It makes me proud to have worked with those two men consummate artists, laugh-evokers without peer, tragic clowns in the misadventures that overtook them.

"I remember the names of only a few of pictures Charlie and I made together: Mabel at the Wheel, Mabel's Strange Predicament, Love and Gasoline, Caught in the Rain, Leading Lizzie Astray,<sup>234</sup> The Fatal Mallet, and Married Life.

"It was in Married Life that I wept while pressing Charlie's pants, and in trying to keep him cheered up endeavored to conceal my own misery by spreading my fingers and pushing up the corners of my mouth into a forced smile.<sup>235</sup> This bit of business was used long afterward in Broken Blossoms. Well, there's plenty of room on the screen for everybody.

"A year or so after he came to us, the fast climbing Chaplin genius clashed fiercely with the marvelous directing talent of the great Sennett, and Charlie left us. Mack had gone to New York, and while he was away Chaplin directed one of his pictures, Dough and Dynamite.

"When Sennett got back and saw it, he was so pleased that he put his own name on it -- and Charlie hit the ceiling! He sent to London for his brother Syd to look after his artistic and business interests, and quit us to join the Essanay in Chicago.

"The day he left he took me to luncheon at Pop [Al] Levy's but first had me go with him to the bank that long afterward figured in a strange coincidence that was partly responsible for my seeing William Desmond Taylor a little while before he was mysteriously shot to death.

"Instead of entering the banking rooms, Charlie led me to the vaults downstairs and opened his box. It was packed with bank notes.

"Why Charlie, you chump,' I said to him, 'what's the idea of keeping all this money here instead of upstairs earning interest?'

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<sup>234</sup> Although Chaplin did make a film *Caught in the Rain*, Mabel is not among the cast. Similarly there is a Keystone film calling *Leading Lizzie Astray*, starring Arbuckle, yet in this case neither Chaplin or Mabel appears in it.

<sup>235</sup> Again Mabel's (or perhaps Sutherland's) memory seems to be failing her here. The film in which she presses Charlie's pants would be *His Trysting Place*, not *Mabel's Married Life*. As to the business where she forces a smile with her fingers, there doesn't appear to be any surviving record - it certainly doesn't occur in either *His Trysting Place* or *Mabel's Married Life*. Why then is this statement made with such seeming conviction? It is possible Mabel used this gesture in a film that is now lost: more likely a Goldwyn film than a Keystone. In the portrait photo used for the dusk jacket cover of Betty Fussell's book, dated around the Goldwyn period, Mabel is seen making a gesture similar to the one described.

“‘Interest? What’s that?’ he echoed dazedly. ‘All I know is this: this is the first big money I ever made, and I’m not going to leave it around where some of those clerks can steal it. If the bank fails all I have to do is come down here and my money’s safe, isn’t it?’

“He stuffed the bills into his pocket and then turned to me and said:

“‘Let me tell you something, Mabel. Most of this money came to me through you: you made Mack hire me at seventy-five dollars, and you got all my raises for me till I’m getting one hundred and twenty-five dollars now. So remember this -- I’m pretty close with my money, but if you ever need any of it, all you have to do is holler. You’re making a lot more than I am now; but some day you may be in a jam and need help. Just let me know, Mabel, and I’ll come running.’

“After we cried a bit over our luncheon, he took the train to Chicago.

“One of the famous pictures we made was Tillie’s Punctured Romance starring Marie Dressler, a genuinely funny comedienne. She played a country girl who left her boob lover, none other than Sennett himself, and came to the big city to make her fortune.

“There she fell in love with evil folk, some of the evil folk being represented by myself in the role of a hotel maid, Fatty Arbuckle, a blundering cop, and Chaplin, a drunk who made a pest of himself around the hotel lobby. It ran five reels and was Nappy’s first big feature. It would cost somebody a lot of money to get that quintet in one picture today!’

“Well, the years slid along. And Nappy and I battled more and more. I wanted better pictures, and I was becoming financially independent. Also, I was getting tired of grinding out short comedies to bolster up programs in which other stars in other companies, as well as our own, were featured in pretentious films and were paid far more than I was.

“Mack accused me of being temperamental and hard to control, both in and out of the studio. I accused him of experimenting with new faces and names, giving them fine pictures, while using me to keep the cash rolling in.

“In the late spring of 1916 he began a picture called Mickey, and when I read the script it made me sick to think of the lovely thing being given to another comedienne. I fell ill, and when I recovered quit.

“Well, Sennett got busy. He let me do Mickey and promised to let me have my own studio and to raise my pay. So the Mabel Normand Studio, Inc. was taken over and a beautiful suite fixed up for my dressing room.

“Mickey hadn’t clicked in its early phases under its first three directors -- Jimmy Young (husband of Clara Kimball Young), J. Farrel MacDonald, and a man named Gilstrom.

“Knowing Sennett was on the run, I made him let me pick a cast and name my own director, Dick Jones. We had quite a battle over Dick, Nappy saying he was too young; but I had my way.

“Then I picked the other players. George Nichols was my father; Laura La Varnie was the cruel mother back East; Lew Cody was her rascally son; Minta Durfee, Fatty Arbuckle’s wife, was an equally wicked sister; and Wheeler Oakman was the surveyor and hero who finally won my hand.

“We began Mickey in August, 1916, and finished it in April the next year. Dick and I threw away all the earlier scripts and started with enough to fill just one sheet of paper, making it up as we went along. All sorts of things happened, including my usual quota of accidents, for most of which Dick was responsible as usual.

“Once, when I was a tomboy in the western mountains, a squirrel was to run up my pants leg. It was attached to piano wires, invisible to the audience, and the little devil got loose from the wires and almost gnawed my leg off. I screamed to Jones, but he thought it was so funny he had the camera keep grinding until he had enough footage and the squirrel had enough legage.

“Dick had trouble about the picture too. He said Sennett owed him sixteen thousand dollars in bonuses he would have made directing short comedies during the time it took us to make Mickey.

“Sennett said he’d have to collect from some new backers of the picture who had got in through one of the old-time trick reorganizations. When Dick couldn’t collect, he kidnapped the film, hid it in a safe deposit box, and disappeared. But detectives finally caught him and he turned it back to Sennett.

“I dwell on Mickey because it was my best work and because it is a historic picture. At first everybody thought it was a flop and it was actually shelved for nearly eighteen months. It cost only about one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, including the earlier failures, but it took in more money through the box offices than any picture ever made in proportion to its cost.

“Sennett, Roy Aiken and his brother Harry, and Sol Lesser made millions out of it. The world rights were estimated at three hundred thousand dollars, and the estimators are still dazed to think how far wrong they were. For example, the man who had the state’s rights in Pennsylvania and Ohio cleaned up more than seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars; and the man who had Kentucky and Indiana made enough in Louisville to pay for the two states and then make three hundred thousand dollars profit.

“Mickey played to more repeat dates than any picture ever made, and to this day the industry prays for another picture like it. I don’t know how many healthy fortunes all over America got a fine start from Mickey.

“It was toward the end of my work in Mickey that I decided I’d had enough of the Keystone Company. So I wired Sam Goldwyn, whom I’d met at a dinner Fanny Ward gave, and he came from New York to Kansas City with his lawyers while I went there to meet him.

“We signed a five-year contract to commence at one thousand dollars and increase until I’d be getting four thousand dollars a week the fourth year, and after that I was to share in the profits of my pictures.

“I caught the next train to California and broke the news to Nappy. He went wild. But I was firm, and I told him good-by as soon as Mickey was cut and titled.

“Goldwyn’s career in the movies deserves a long chapter. Briefly, his name was Samuel Goldfish and he sold gloves for a company in Gloversville, New York. With his brother-in-law, Jesse Lasky, he went into pictures, and his really unusual talents in the amusement world have taken him far.

“Before he hired me he had interested Arch and Edgar Selwyn in one of his companies, and he changed his name, using his own first syllable and Selwyn’s last one, renaming himself Goldwyn.

“I went on to New York and took a big apartment on Seventy-first Street near West End Avenue, and my experiences in the East and in Culver City after Goldwyn brought his company out here were numerous, amusing, and sometimes unhappy.”



As Mabel Normand strolled through her lovely garden on Camden Drive, mobilizing her recollections of the four years spent with Goldwyn's company, it occurred to me that a more coherent narrative might be obtained from Goldwyn himself.

Eager to assist, but saying he was too busy, Goldwyn sent me to Abraham Lehr, vice president and supervisor of productions. I found Mr. Lehr a calm, dispassionate critic of Mabel Normand's career, and her friend. Here is what he told me.

"I met Mabel soon after I joined Goldwyn's company in October, 1917. The production department brought me a bitter complaint that her first picture was exceeding the sum allotted to it, for the simple reason that she wouldn't come to work on time.

"Mabel had had a curious experience with us. She came East early in 1917 and was met by Sennett, Sam Rork, and Arthur Graham Butler, Sennett's lawyer. They convinced her that one thousand dollars a week was far too little for her to begin on. So she quarreled with Goldwyn and he kept her 'walking' for six months.

"Part of that time she lived with Raymond Hitchcock and his wife, Flora Zabelle, in Great Neck; and whenever Goldwyn called on her to tell her she was foolish to remain idle, she would borrow Hitchy's expensive car and show Goldwyn how prosperous she was.

"But Mabel was absolutely honest, and she eventually decided Goldwyn had signed her contract in good faith, and she came to work. There had been some sort of readjustment, and she was getting one thousand five hundred dollars a week when I came to the company as head of production and a sort of efficiency expert.

"I resolved to take disciplinary steps and let her know at once that I was going to be a boss. But I knew little of Mabel and her ways.

"What a little devil she was! What a glorious, lovable, unmanageable minx! Every human being on our Fort Lee lot was her slave, conspiring to cover up her madcap traits, her incorrigible tardiness, and her amazing indifference to hours and routine and costs and system.

"She'd make a great entrance when she finally did show up, an hour or two late. My office opened on the hall she had to use to reach the sets, and here she would come parading past my door, her chauffeur carrying her wraps, her secretary with arms filled with books, and her maid laden with perfumes and bags of cookies and make-up material.

"She always stopped at my door, as if surprised that I was down before her. Then she would get a cookie, hold it aloft, come into my room, perch herself on my desk, and swing her beautiful legs as she explained that, knowing I liked that particular sort of cookie, she was late because she waited for a certain baker to finish making it -- though she never saw me eat a cookie in her life. One of the reasons for being late completely beat the stern note out of my scoldings. On the way from Seventy-first Street to the One Hundred and Thirtieth Street Hudson Ferry, she would pick up every staggering soldier going north. By the time she reached the ferry she'd have them jammed inside, on the running boards, on the hood, and even on the top.

"She knew they'd made a night of it and would be punished if they reached Camp Merrit, just beyond our Jersey studio, too late for roll call. These men worshipped her, and for a year or so afterward she'd show me souvenirs they sent her from France and the Rhine.

"Some of them had their insurance made out to her, having no kin of their own, and when they were killed she turned the money into camp funds.

"We had countless battles, most of which ended in a total rout for me. She would chuck me under the chin, veil her great dark eyes, and look so innocent or repentant that I'd throw my hands up and walk away.

"I'd be even more furious when she tripped away from her victory toward the camera, singing some taunting song.

"I quickly found out what everybody in the industry knows -- that she was like Chaplin in one respect: they are the only two artists who truly deserve the use of that often misused word, genius. With this difference, that Chaplin's genius yields to his instincts, and we know that sooner or later his masterpiece will be ready for release. And besides, it's his own money he's loitering on.

"With Mabel we never knew whether she would show up at all! And she was no more capable of conforming to businesslike principles, than Michelangelo could turn out a Moses at command or learn to punch a clock.

"I used to glance at the books her retinue carried -- Schopenhauer, Brander Matthews, Francois Coppee, Montaigne, Heywood Broun, Conrad, Baudelaire, Freud, and cheap magazines of working girl's confessions, atrocious French novels -- for she had learned that language fluently -- and all sorts of leaflets put out by socialists and Greenwich Village writers.

"Her friends used to whisper information as to where they'd seen her the night before, hoping I could make her take better care of herself and do more work.

"When I taxed her with these nocturnal prowls, she would stop in the midst of the marvelous torrent of lies she was telling me, and stare at me as if I were a witch. She even accused me of having private detectives trail her.

"On my first birthday with the company she made me a present of a magnificent wrist watch. A little note accompanied it.

*'Dear Mr. Leer: Wishing you many returns of the day. And now, damn you, you and your dicks can tell just what time I come in. Love, Mabel'*

"You'll notice on the note, which I've kept all these years, that she spells my name wrong. Well, she wrote me hundreds of notes while she was with us and never once spelled it right. Just one of her whims. And here is a splendid photograph she gave me on which she wrote:

*'To my friend, Mr. Lerr:*

*Roses are red, violets are blue;*

*Whenever I'm late I think of you.'*

"Goldwyn was also her slave and refused to help me keep her in line. How she stormed around my office the day she discovered that for Miss Geraldine Farrar we had fixed up pleated silk panels in her dressing room. Not that Mabel cared whether she had pleated silk panels, but she didn't want Geraldine to put one over on her.

"She defeated me again when I decided Victor Schertzinger had directed enough of her pictures. Victor played the piano like an angel and so did Mabel, and they lost lots of valuable time on the set singing French songs. So I told him he was to direct some male star and another man would direct Mabel's next film.

"She burst into my room a few minutes later, raving and pleading and swearing fearful oaths that she would drop dead on the spot if Victor didn't work in her pictures. But I noticed that when she took these famous oaths she always moved an inch or two off the spot before she finished the sentence!

"When I was firm, she burst into tears and offered to buy me a fine new car. I told her that I was afraid to take it because Mary Garden or Maxine Elliot might hear about it and decide they, too, could bribe me to cater to their temperaments.

"Then she swung out of my office and ran weeping to her dressing room. I followed, to reason with her, but she grabbed her perfume atomizer, backed me into a corner, and squirted it all over me, remarking as she tossed the empty container aside, 'Now you beastly tyrant, take that smell home to your wife and see how you like it!'

"My wife, one of the best friends Mabel ever had, laughed when I told her about it and counseled me to let her keep Schertzinger.

"After we came out to Culver City we had a dreadful time with Mabel's finances. I've never seen a man or woman less mercenary than she, or more indifferent to the value of money, or one who gave away more to poor people around the studios of California.

"One year Goldwyn flatly refused to give her all her salary, taking out one thousand dollars a week and buying fifty-two liberty bonds for her.

"After we'd been here a year or so we decided to change our account from one bank to another. Our auditor was puzzled because the bank insisted we had sixty-thousand dollars more than our books showed.

"We finally traced it down and discovered that Mabel had failed to cash eleven checks of four thousand dollars each, and Will Rogers had not deposited twenty-two thousand dollars we paid him. I sent for Mabel and she said the checks were in her safety deposit box at the bank. I told her she ought to have it earning four percent, and she answered:

"'Oh, Abe you worry about interest. Well, I've got a date for every night this week, and you work me so hard I can't get to the bank in the daytime. I'll fix it up next week, old pumpkin head.'

"When the first influenza epidemic closed so many theaters and we were having hard sledding financially, Mabel strolled into Goldwyn's office one day and threw a bundle down on the desk.

"'There you are, Sammy, my love,' she said. 'If that'll tide you over a bit, help yourself. And you needn't pay me any salary till things pick up; and I'll work harder than ever for you.'

"The bundle contained the fifty-two Liberty bonds and a lot of deeds to real estate she had bought. Fortunately, Goldwyn didn't have to borrow them.

"We had some rare characters in this concern. Among the people we employed, often at staggering prices were Will Rogers, Tom Moore, Mae Marsh, Maxine Elliot, Madge Kennedy, Jane Cowl, Mary Garden, Hamilton Revelle, Pauline Frederick, Marie Doro, Frank McIntyre, Jack Pickford, John Barrymore, Lou Tellegen, and many others.

"Not one of them was as valuable to us as Mabel, whose pictures cost less and brought in more money than anybody's at that time. Why, we didn't even have to buy great pictures for her; her personality made any picture a success with the booking agents even before it was started!

"Mabel used to have lots of fun with Polly Frederick. They were close friends; but Polly had to have an orchestra sobbing out somber, grand music which she regarded as appropriate for her great dramatic moments.

"Mabel would be on the next set, and when she knew Polly was going through some emotional scene and was keyed to a feverish pitch, she would have her own orchestra break out in some mad syncopation that would drive Miss Frederick wild and make her have to do her scene all over.

"In Mabel's first picture for us, Joan of Plattsburg, a war film, there was a goose. It was a savage brute and they used to tease it just before Mabel came on so it would be sure to bite her.

"George Loane Tucker was directing, and with his assistant, Don O'Brien, was on the roof of a little shed fixing up a set. They lifted the goose up there and it bit one of them on the nose. Both fell off the shed.

"When Mabel got up there to do her stunt, she leaned over and the goose bit her wickedly in the nearest part of her anatomy. She shrieked and they fell to the ground, a wild tangle of skirts and wings and comedienne and goose. She landed on top and knocked it senseless. Then she leaped to her feet, grabbed it by the neck, stormed furiously into my office, and hurled it on my desk.

"'There's your damned man-eating duck!' she cried. 'I'm through being three meals a day for him. Make him your own little playmate if you think so much of him.'

"Mabel had the time of her life when Goldwyn conceived the fine publicity idea, but costly experiment, of the Eminent Authors. He gathered them from all over the world, signed them to contracts, and brought them out to Hollywood to write great stories for the screen.

"The trouble with writers who come to the films is twofold: either they try to write down to us, to what they contemptuously regard as a moron industry; or they try to elevate us to their standards -- though just what that standard is, few except themselves could explain.

"Few of them made good in the silent films without the help of trained, practical scenario writers. This was true even of the most skilled craftsmen with the pen. Among them were Gertrude Atherton, Booth Tarkington, Basil King, Rex Beach, Mary Roberts Rinehart, Leroy Scott, Gouverneur Morris, Rupert Hughes, Alice Duer Miller, Montague Glass, and Maurice Maeterlinck. We had quite a time with the latter, a Belgian.

"After he had been with us three months, the editorial department sent up to me the three things he had written and I had to send for him through his manager, a chap named Russell. Russell was horrified when I told him to bring Maeterlinck to the office.

"'Why, Mr. Lehr!', he gasped. 'Do you mean you expect The Master to come all the way down here to see you?'

"I told him I meant just that and to snap into it. He went away, and Mabel, who had been standing in the hall during this dialogue, came in. She threw her arms around me and kissed me.

“‘Abraham, you’re a duck!’ she said. ‘That’s what the high-hat mob’s been needing. Do you know what I’m going to do? I’m going to get a chair and stand in the hall and peek over the transom while you lay The Master out. The firm hand now, you old iceberg. Don’t weaken, Abie, for little Mabel’s with you.’

“Presently Maeterlinck and his young wife and Russell and his wife were in my office. I asked The Master if he objected while I commented on his three plays, Russell translating my remarks into French and Mabel’s saucy dark eyes dancing at me through the transom. Maeterlinck said to go ahead, so I went:

“‘Well, you’ve written about a young boy who gets a fine family rearing, and then when he’s about old enough to vote goes out and gets drunk. The next day, while he’s recovering, he feels so ashamed that in a dream he sees all his ancestors pointing their fingers at him and shaking their heads.

“‘Now, Mr. Maeterlinck, that might be a great idea for something; I don’t know what. I do know it won’t make a picture. Our young men in America haven’t enough ancestors to have that part of the story make much sense. And that seems to be about all I find in Script Number One.

“‘Your second play tells of a young boy hunting for happiness. He makes rather a nuisance of himself in a sissy sort of way, but finally he finds it. He isn’t selfish with it. He wants to share it with his family. So he takes a blue bird, which is what brought him happiness, pulls a few feathers out of its breast, and blows them under the closed door into the next room where his family seated, waiting for him to be happy.

“‘And that seems to be about all I find in your second offering. I think happiness is fine, and I’m perfectly willing for everybody to get all of it they can. But I’m afraid our Sauk Center, Michigan, and Cairo, Illinois, film fans would find it a bit complicated to understand how a couple of feathers blown across a door jamb are going to give people in the next room ecstasy -- ‘

“There was a crash in the hall outside and a wild strangling sound of smothered laughter. The master started up, but I lifted my hand and assured him it was merely a prop boy dropping a ladder. Then I wriggled my fingers around the corner of my desk to tell Mabel, who had climbed back up, to behave herself or go away.

“‘And your third story,’ I went on, addressing the sad face of The Master, ‘your third play is a western. Now, with all proper obeisance to your genius and standing in the world of letters, I’m going to be crude enough to suggest that if there is one thing on earth you, a Belgian dramatist and essayist cannot do, it is to write a cowboy story.

“‘And that seems to represent your labors during the last three months. Will you be good enough to inform me if you’ll write something we can use?’

“He looked unhappily at me and answered: ‘If those themes are unsuitable, can you give me an idea of what you want?’

“We had explained everything to him before he even left New York, but apparently it was all wasted. I was in despair, for he had certainly been an expensive guest, having a furnished house, automobiles, servants, and all other expenses. But I went on, hoping to save a few dimes out of the fortune he had cost us.

“‘How about a story with some love in it?’ I suggested cynically.

“‘But you don’t want a story about real love!’ he exclaimed.

“‘What do you mean we don’t want real love!’

“‘Why, there can be no real love without adultery, and Americans don’t understand that in the way I want to write about it.’

“There was another crash outside the door, and Mabel sank again. Well, I gave Maeterlinck a final order on the cashier and waved him out, and that was the last of The Master in the movies. After they’d stalked away, Mabel came in.

“‘Abe, you’re a darling!’ she cried, perching herself on my desk. ‘But I’m afraid you’re merely a sordid commercial soul. No art in your heart, duckie! Why, I think you can make wonderful pictures with a boy blowing feathers under a door. And don’t forget his Life of the Bee.’

“She went away, shaking her head in mock pity for my lack of culture, and grumbling that the money The Master had cost us would prevent her from getting a raise for six months.

“Mabel made eighteen pictures for us. And then we quarreled and she returned to Mack Sennett ¾ and the scandal of William Desmond Taylor’s strange murder. I’ll tell you the names of these pictures and the reason she left us.”

\* from *Liberty*, September 27, 1930

#### **Part Four -- The Taylor Mystery**

Abraham Lehr, vice president and production supervisor of the Goldwyn company, concluded his story of Mabel Normand’s career with Goldwyn by giving the titles of the eighteen pictures she made for him. These were: Joan of Plattsburg, The Last Chance, Dodging a Million, The Floor Below, The Venus Model, Arabelle Flynn<sup>236</sup>, Back to the Woods, Peck’s Bad Girl, A Perfect 36, Sis Hopkins, The Pest, When Doctors Disagree, Upstairs, The Jinx, Pinto, The Slim Princess, What Happened to Rosa, and Head Over Heels.

“Head Over Heels was released in April 1921,” said Mr. Lehr. “Mabel had been with us four years and had a year to go. But she was dissatisfied, saying we weren’t giving her good pictures, and complaining about conditions around the studio. So Mr. Goldwyn released her from contract.

“We were genuinely sorry, because we all loved her and because she was the finest comedienne the screen has seen.”

Mabel Normand returned to the Sennett organization. Her first picture was Molly O. Lowell Sherman was the villain. It started late in the fall of 1921, and took twelve weeks to make.

And on Feb. 1, 1922, just when Molly O was about to be released and Sennett and Mabel had begun work on Suzanna, the world was startled by the mysterious murder of William Desmond Taylor, president of the Motion Picture Director’s Association, and regarded as one of the screen’s most capable directors.

I record here what Mabel Normand told me of the tragedy. It was the first time that she ever told in complete detail all she knew about the still unsolved assassination. And a painstaking investigation among the official

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<sup>236</sup> *Arabelle Flynn* (or *Arabella Flynn*) and *Dodging a Million* are actually the same film.

archives and the Los Angeles authorities who know all there is to know about the slaying substantiated the comedienne's story in every essential.

Before quoting directly the account given me by Miss Normand, a word or two concerning Taylor is desirable to give the narrative its necessary background and color.

Little of an authentic character has ever been made known concerning Taylor's private life prior to the year 1908. At that time he ran an art and antique shop on Fifth Avenue, New York. He was married and the father of a girl. His name then was William Deane Tanner, and his home in Larchmont, a suburb. He had come from England.

In the summer of 1908, Taylor (Tanner) informed his employees at noon that he was going to Long Island for the races, and walked out of the shop. His aides never saw or heard of him again until he was shot and killed, fourteen years later.

There is a record of William Desmond Taylor playing in a stock company in Skagway, Fairbanks, and other Alaskan towns in 1909, and he said to have been interested in mining ventures near Dawson and in the Klondike.

A few years later he appeared in the movie colony of Hollywood and filled minor jobs until his talents elevated him to the megaphone with the Famous Players-Lasky company. Taylor was highly respected, both as a man and as a director.

Frail in health, he was not known as a drinking man; and he is known to have incurred the active hostility of narcotic peddlers, who roamed Hollywood in profusion at that time, by boldly rescuing numerous young women from the clutches of habit forming drugs -- cocaine, heroin, morphine, opium, ether, marihuana, and chloroform.

Truth makes it necessary to report that Mabel was the special object of his friendly interest in this regard. For some time her friends, and they were legion, had tried desperately to rescue the little comedienne from an addiction brought on by her yielding to the sinister influence around her. Wally Reid and other stars had led the way; they had exhausted all the brand-new sensations and thrills sudden wealth had brought into their lives; and tired of the commonplace indulgences, had experimented with those popular in what may be called the Dope Era of the Movies. It was the madness of this era that brought Will Hays to the picture industry. So, it was to help his friend Mabel and others then in the toils that Taylor bent his earnest efforts. And the authorities for a while thought that vengeful narcotic peddlers had caused Taylor's murder.

Another enigmatic figure appears in the drama -- Edward F. Sands. It is known that he was in the British army as Edward Fitz Strathmore, though where he hailed from, and what his real relations were with Taylor, are as unfathomed as to where he fled shortly before the murder of the director.

Sand's position with the director was that of valet. But he seems to have been more than that; for when Taylor went to England because of ill health late in 1921, Sands forged his master's name to innumerable checks; pawned his jewelry, wrecked two of his cars, stole nearly all his clothes, and evidently had also thrived by blackmailing his employer.

When Taylor returned Sands vanished. He has never since been seen. To replace him, Taylor hired a Negro, Henry Peavey.

Another movie actress figured in the case: Mary Miles Minter, then amazingly popular in pictures. Taylor had directed her in *Anne of Green Gables* for Famous Players.

She was madly enamored of him. Her letters and lingerie bearing her initials intrigued the detectives who searched the Taylor premises for the clew they never were to find. Miss Minter dropped out of pictures soon afterward.

Mrs. Charlotte Shelby, the mother of Miss Minter, seems to have been opposed to her daughters infatuation for the Englishman. She and Mary had some notable quarrels at the time, and afterward, concerning the fortune Mary made in pictures.

"Late in January we began to make *Suzanna*," Mabel Normand told me. "The whole world and my future seemed cheerful and promising. Not only was the picture a good one, but I felt that at last I was coming into my own, both as to lovely stories and as to greater achievements as a comedienne.

"And one of the fine friendships of my life had come to me, my relations with Taylor. To his discriminating taste I owe much of the choice I have made him from the world's literature for my library shelves. He was a splendid director, and together we went to see some picture several nights a week.

"On February 1, Sennett gave me a day off, saying he would phone when to show up next day. I awoke about noon, and wondered how I'd spend my day.

"I had received so many beautiful Christmas gifts, and there were many duplicates I wanted to exchange, the donors having given me that privilege. And I had received many darling presents from the workers around the studio ¾ silver platters from the electricians, and similar things from the prop boys, and so on.

"So I decided to load my car with these things and go to the jewelers, where I could exchange some of them, and on the others have the names of my friends engraved.

"I was also going to leave my jewelry I'd taken out for the holiday parties in my safety deposit boxes at Hellman's Night and Day Bank.

"Well, of course, I loafed around until Mamie Owens my maid told me I'd better hurry on downtown. So I had William Davis, the chauffeur, carry the packages out to the car, and then I scurried into my clothes. I explained to Mamie that I was going to my two jewelers', Brocks' and Feagen's, and would telephone her.

"I was almost too late. I got into Brock's store just before closing time, six o'clock, told them what I wanted, and then hastened over to Feagen's, where they were just locking the front door. I pounded on the glass and a clerk recognized me and let me in. All this, and what followed, was carefully checked by the police.

"After I had explained to Feagen's clerk what I wanted, I ordered Davis to drive me to the Hellman bank at Sixth and Main Streets. On the way I noticed a sign that Harold Lloyd's latest picture was being shown<sup>237</sup>, and I decided to see it before going home.

"In the safety vaults I signed my name and took one of my boxes into a little room. I sat awhile looking at my jewelry and then put it into the box. Suddenly I decided to call my house and tell Mamie I'd dine downtown and see the Lloyd comedy.

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<sup>237</sup> The Harold Lloyd film mentioned here was *A Sailor Made Man*.

"I called up my apartment. I lived at 3089 West Seventh Street, a dozen blocks or so from Taylor's bungalow apartment at 404-B South Alvarado Street. Mamie answered the phone and I told her what I intended to do.

"But you can't go to the picture tonight, Miss Normand," she said. "Mr. Sennett called up and said for you to be ready to go on location tomorrow morning at seven o'clock with your make-up on. He'll send a studio car for you.

"And Mr. Taylor just called up and said he had two books for you, and to ask you when you could call for them, or should he bring them over?

"I think you ought to drive by his place," Mamie went on, "and get the books and then come on home and go to bed, and I'll serve your dinner in bed and comb your hair, so you can get up bright and early for work."

"I told Mamie I thought her idea great, and I'd do as she had suggested.

"As I left the vault I glanced at my wrist watch. It was nearly seven o'clock. Then I wondered what books Bill had bought for me. I had my Freud with me and I thought he'd be pleased to know I read it in my car. I remembered there was a new book out by Ethel M. Dell, and I made a bet with myself that that was one of the books he had. I wondered about the other, until I recalled he had said a few days before that he knew of a fine critique on Nietzsche and was going to buy me the translation.

"As I started to step into my car, I suddenly felt a great appetite for peanuts. I looked around. Standing across the street, against the curb, was a two-wheeled, glass-topped wagon filled with peanuts.

"I told Davis to wait, skipped over, and picked up two bags of these and one of freshly popped corn. Then I handed the man a ten-dollar bill, the smallest I had.

"He looked reproachfully at me and said he couldn't change it. I pretended to be surprised and angry.

"You've been here all day," I scolded him, "and I can't understand why you haven't got a whole lot of money."

"Then I laughed and went into a drug store for change.

"I went back to my car and told Davis to take me to Bill's. As we drove through the traffic I looked out at the passing show. Then I saw a news stand and hollered for Davis to stop there.

"Displayed prominently was a Police Gazette, and on its front cover was a beautiful posed head of a pretty girl. Sennett had had his still-camera man making shots of me to go with the advertising for Suzanna, and we had wrangled a lot about the head poses.

"And there on the front cover of the Gazette was an idea for a pose. So I hopped out and bought it.

"We then went on to Bill's house. It was part of an attractive arrangement. There were eight little two-story cottages built around a U, three on each side and two at the end, the open end of the U fronting on Alvarado Street. I don't know who lived in five of them; but the second on the left was occupied by Edna Purviance, the third was Taylor's, and the one on the right at the end was rented by Douglas McLean and his wife.

"I told Davis I'd be gone only a little while, and asked him to sweep out the peanut shells I'd scattered on the floor of the car. I got out, left my Freud and magazine on the seat, and walked up the left-hand cement walk to Bill's house. I carried a bag of peanuts to show my gratitude for the two books she had for me!

"A peculiarity the director had was that he never closed his front door during the day and seldom at night, a point Mrs. McLean emphasized in her testimony at the inquest, as you shall see.

"When I reached Bill's open door I heard a voice inside: he was using the telephone. So I walked around the flower beds until he had quit talking. Then I rang his bell.

"Taylor came to the door, smiled, and held out both hands.

"Helloa, Mabel darling," he said. "I know what you came for -- to get two books I've just got for you."

"Righto, my bright duck," I said going in. "And I brought you a present too. Guess what it is." I held the bag of peanuts behind me.

"No man's brain could possibly guess what you'd buy," he retorted. "But I'll bet it's something very fine. But come on in and have dinner. I've just finished mine but Peavey can fix you something."

"Thanks, Bill, but Mamie's going to feed me in bed tonight," I said. "I've a seven o'clock appointment to go to on location, and I'm going to sleep early. But you go ahead with your dinner," I went on, seeing through the arch that separated the two rooms that the table was covered with dishes.

"I've already finished," Bill answered, "and I don't want any dessert. But you'll have a cocktail, won't you? I'll drink one with you, if you will."

"Sure," I said. "And I've just the thing for your dessert. Here it is, Bill -- a bag of peanuts."

"He laughed, and put the bag of peanuts on top of his piano. They found it there untouched the next morning. Then he shouted to Peavey to mix a couple of cocktails, and returned to his seat in front of his writing table. The whole top of the table was covered with canceled checks, and he called me over. I sat on the arm of his chair, and he pointed at the litter and said:

"Look, Mabel, what that damned fellow Sands did to me. Nearly every one of those checks is a forgery; and, do you know, he did such a good job that to save my life I can't tell which are my signatures and which are forgeries! Just look at this."

"He picked up one check he knew he had signed and beside it held one he was uncertain about. Neither of us could see any difference in the signatures.

"What are you going to do about it, Bill? And what are you going to do about Sands?"

"What on earth can I do about it?" he wailed. "I'll never get it straightened out. As for Sands, of course he's been missing. If they ever find him, you can bet I'll do plenty for him."

"Peavey came in with the cocktails on a little silver tray. He put them down, where the empty glasses were found the next morning, and bowed low.

"How do you do, Miss Normand," he said in his shrill voice. "I trust all is well with you."

"All's well, Henry, thanks," I said. Henry had been released from jail that morning, Bill having gone down to get him out of some trouble he'd got into a few days before in one of the city parks. He ask Taylor if that was all for him.

"Yes, Henry," said Bill. "Clean up out there and trot along. And don't worry; I think I can fix up everything downtown tomorrow."

"Henry fluttered about a while, and then bowed as he went out, leaving the door open as he always did. It was about twenty minutes past seven o'clock. He left each evening after dinner and came the next morning at seven.

"After he'd gone, Bill asked me to guess what books he had for me. I did, and he was astonished when I told him they were *Rosa Mundi*, by Ethel M. Dell, and the translation of a German criticism of Nietzsche.

"He got the books from a shelf and unwrapped them. Together we turned the pages, as people will with a new book, pausing to glance at a paragraph here and there and comment on it, and wondering if this new Dell Book was as promising picture material as her other novels.

"Then we talked about Suzanna and how my picture was going, and whatever film it was Bill was working on at the time, and making a future dinner engagement before going to see the Harold Lloyd Film, and about any number of things we were interested in.

"After I'd played the piano for him, as usual being scolded because I deliberately introduced a lot of discords, and we had about exhausted topics to talk about, he offered to call Fellows, his chauffeur, and take me home. But I said no; that my car was at the curb. He said he'd telephone me at nine o'clock, and I told him, all right, but that Mamie wouldn't disturb me if I'd gone to sleep.

"Then he walked down toward the street with me. In the cottage next to Edna's we saw a man sitting near the window under a light reading the afternoon papers.

"How important the insignificant turns out to be! The testimony of that man<sup>238</sup> -- that he had heard Taylor and me walking down the path in the dusk and heard us laughing and talking -- is all that saved me from a ghastly fate.

"I tremble even yet to think what they might have done to me if this man had not told of seeing us leaving together and glancing out a few minutes later to see Taylor striding back alone to his bungalow, a few minutes before the shot was heard.

"When we reached the curb, Davis was standing at the door of my car, his feet amidst the litter of the peanut shells he had swept out of the tonneau. Bill laughed when he saw them and then looked into the car and saw the *Police Gazette* lying there beside my volume of Freud. He picked them up and held them at arm's length.

"'Freud and the *Police Gazette*!' he exclaimed. 'Who else in all this wide world would be capable of having in her possession two such extremes in literature? Mabel, Mabel, my darling, I'm afraid you're hopeless!'

"'I wonder what's to become of you, my dear. You have such terrific possibilities to scale the peaks, and you seem so often to prefer the depths. Oh, Mabel, if a lovely thing, such as perfect trust and perfect love, had ever come into your strange life!'

"He looked again at the things he held, then looked at me and shook his head  $\frac{3}{4}$  for he loved me dearly. Then he tossed them back into my car.

"I pulled his ear lobe and said: 'Don't be silly, Bill. You won't believe it, but I bought that *Police Gazette* because of the pose of that girl's head on the cover. Well, toodle-oo, Bill, old friend; see you in a day or two.'

"He helped me into my car and Davis drove away. I looked back, and we wafted kisses on our hands to each other as long as I could see him standing there at the edge of the sidewalk.

"I never saw him again. And he did not telephone me at nine o'clock, as he had promised, for he was lying on the floor of his living room, shot through the back and dead within a few minutes after I left him.

"The next morning hell broke loose. It raged about my head for weeks, instantly identifying me with a crime I had no more to do with than you did; besmirching me almost before the smoke of the unknown assassin's pistol had eddied away.

"The authorities, baffled by their failure to find a single clew, finally came to my rescue and tore me out of the clutches of the newspaper men, reporters who, with nothing else to write about, answered their editors' demands for news with countless interviews with me and unkind interpretations of what I told them, and my surmises."

Taylor walked back to his cottage, and evidently sat down again to looked at the forged checks on his table. When next seen, he was lying on the floor, coat carefully buttoned, lapels smoothed down, arms lying straight beside the body, feet close together, trousers unwrinkled.

The assassin had evidently slipped into the living room and hidden behind the open door after Taylor and Mabel left to go to her car.

For an hour after his body was discovered by Peavey the next morning and the alarm sounded by the terrified Negro, it was thought Taylor had died of heart disease, the bullet wound under his left shoulder blade not being found until the ambulance came.

At the inquest everybody who knew anything testified. Mrs. Douglas McLean said that a little before eight o'clock she heard a pistol shot. She and her maid glanced at each other, and Mrs. McLean stepped to her little upstairs veranda in time to see a short, stocky man, with a muffler around his neck and his cap pulled down, step out of the Taylor dwelling, close the door carefully behind him, glance casually about, and then walk down the steps.

He turned to the left and disappeared between the Taylor bungalow and the house between it and the McLean cottage into a little court where the Taylor garage opened on the alley.

Douglas McLean also heard the shot and discussed with his wife the possibility that the man she had seen leaving had fired it. But nothing was done, and Peavey found the door closed the next morning.

Surprised by this, he rang the bell, and finally opened the door to find his master's body rigid on the floor near the little table.

When Peavey's excited shrieks startled the courtyard, Edna Purviance thrust her head out of her bedroom window. When she learned Taylor was dead she rushed to her telephone. First she called Mabel, and Mabel became almost hysterical.

Then she called Mary Miles Minter, and Mary became wholly so. She started to run to the front door and Mrs. Shelby barred her way.

"You're not going over there," the mother firmly said.

"But Bill Taylor's been murdered!" the little blond screamed.

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<sup>238</sup> This would be Mr. Lawrence. See Appendix D.

They stood and argued about it a while, and Mary fell weeping into a chair before a mirror. Suddenly she noticed her reflection and was struck by the reflection on her own face.

"Look, mother," she cried; "look at my expression! Don't I register frozen horror perfectly?"

"Hold it, dear!" cried Mrs. Shelby, running around in front to see.

Then Mary got out of the house and hastened to the thronged courtyard where now detectives, newspaper men, movie directors, and tenant were milling around in great confusion. When she arrived she promptly put on a mad scene, screaming and calling, 'Bill, my darling, speak to me,' and tearing her fair curls and dashing to and fro across the flower beds -- and trying to get into the house.

The police prevented her entrance, for they had already found much feminine finery and dainty lingerie, some of it monogrammed with three Ms, and many startling letters -- letters which presently became a passport ushering Mary Miles Minter into oblivion.

And then the storm burst with unbelievable fury about Mabel Normand's head.

\* from *Liberty*, October 4, 1930

#### **Part Five -- Lightning Strikes Twice**

"I had donned the Spanish costume I was using in Suzanna and was seated before my mirror finishing my makeup, when Edna Purviance telephoned me that Bill Taylor had been shot to death," Mabel Normand went on with the story of the most tragic moment in her crowded, colorful career.

"I was incredulous, then stunned, and then I almost went to pieces. I phoned Dick Jones at the studio; and John Waldron, Sennett's manager, who was to send a car to take me out on location, hurried to my apartment. He seemed worried when I told him that another phone call from the murder scene indicated that I had been the last person known to have been with Taylor a few moments before he was slain.

"And then the roof of the world tumbled in on me. There was a wild ringing at my doorbell and a wilder clamor outside, and when the door was opened the wildest mob I ever saw tumbled into my living room -- detectives and newspaper men and press photographers and curious strangers, a swarm that eddied around me, still in my Suzanna costume, and hurled a million questions that I couldn't understand, much less answer coherently.

"Then it dawned on me hours after they had raided my apartment, that it might be in the minds of some of them that I had murdered my friend! That ghastly possibility made me even more frantic, and I imagine the more I talked the less sense I made out of what was, and what was soon proved to be, a perfectly innocent coincidence, that I happened to have been the last person who saw Taylor alive, except the man in the bungalow who saw him returning to his cottage -- and the person who hid behind his door in his absence and shot him in the back.

"And the afternoon papers! God, it is a fearful thing to see one's name smeared in huge letters all the way across the top of a newspaper! I never read a paper for a year after the excitement quieted down.

"Well, they certainly kept hounding me, newspaper men and cameramen from all over the United States. The police couldn't find a single clue; and I was thankful that I had not written any letters to Taylor into whose contents the detectives could read anything significant.

"And what a break I got that the nightgowns had three Ms on them! One of the reasons the officials and press beagles were put on my track, the innocent quarry, was a subtle one that we did not discover until long after. There was a huge sum tied up in Mary Miles Minter's pictures and it was feared the finding of her effects and letters in Taylor's rooms might affect the release of those pictures. There was less money involved in me; and the only bitter thought that I have ever entertained in all my life is the thought that I was tossed to the lions to save another actress, even if she was as guiltless of the murder as I was.

"And what a commentary the scandal was on the word friendship! Not that my friends, and their name is Multitude, doubted my innocence, but the turmoil and oceans of printer's ink were so notoriously involving me that they feared to come too near the besmirched Normand. I like to be charitable, and I do not blame them. We all knew what happened to Fatty Arbuckle and his career, and the industry simply had to wait and let the storm subside.

"But I cherish above all memories of my life this one -- that while hundreds of men and women sent me cryptic messages of love and confidence and succor, and while dozens called at my apartment, even if they did leave their motors a few blocks away, out of sight of the cordon of newspaper men and detectives around my premises while they came inconspicuously on foot to see me, there was one woman, a famous actress, who drove boldly to my front door, strode proudly through the crowd and pressed my bell, the bell whose endless ringing terrified me all day long where I crouched against my wall while the tempest of innuendo and suspicion and frightful publicity howled and raged and swirled and thundered around my door.

"I myself desperately flung the door wide, and there stood Norma Talmadge. In full view of the throng, and the world which was to learn of the visit a few hours later in their newspapers, she held out her arms and I crept into them.

"Don't cry, Mabel,' my old friend said, patting my shoulder. 'I know you had nothing to do with it, my dear. And I came as quickly as I could to tell you that I love you and that I'm your friend and that you can count on me for anything on earth I have.'

"The price of all that undeserved publicity was a dear one, but not too dear if it brought to me the reassurance of Norma Talmadge's love and confidence; and I glory in this chance publicly to acknowledge the debt I owe her for her friendship.

"Everybody who knew me or knew Bill Taylor was questioned again and again by authorities. As the years slipped past, some of the nightmare seems silly, but you may be sure everything was very important and very ominous and very mysterious in that horrific period.

"Peavey and Mrs. Douglas McLean told, respectively of leaving me alone with Taylor and finding his body the next morning, and of seeing the never-identified assassin leaving Bill's front door after murdering him. Pressed to describe this individual, Mrs. McLean found it difficult, since he had a muffler around his neck and his cap was pulled down over his eyes.

"But she knew Sands and said it wasn't he -- and she seemed startled when some astute questioner in the district attorney's office suggested that the slayer might have been a woman dressed in man's clothing. She reflected a

moment and acknowledged that the killer was built more like a woman than a man. But on this tenuous supposition the authorities could not proceed, since no other tangible clue supported this theory.

"I don't know who killed William Desmond Taylor. I don't believe it was Sands, because he had everything to gain by keeping out of the way of Bill Taylor's retributive animosity.

"I cannot know, of course, but I firmly believe that some day the murderer will be discovered, and I am one with the rest of Los Angeles when I say that I think it will be found that the guilty person was a woman dressed as a man!

"Well, though the newspaper boys still needed copy, I was tired of being it, and I finally collapsed. So Sennett halted work on Suzanna and smuggled me away to a little cottage in Altadena, a suburb of Pasadena. There I stayed for a month or so, until the chase died down and my health was restored.

"Then I went back to work. Suzanna was written by Sennett and Ray Griffith, later a Paramount star. Winifred Bryson was the heavy woman; George Nichols, who has since died, was my father, as he was in so many other films; Leon Barry was the heavy man; Walter McGrail was the hero, and Eric Mayne was the father. The picture ran seven reels, and I got hurt in it, as usual.

"It was Dick Jones' fault, also as usual! There were two little bears in the original play, and I used to wear a wide leather belt which we covered with honey. The bears soon learned to toddle along beside me, licking at my waist and pawing at the heavy belt. One day one of them got his claws inside the belt and almost tore me to pieces. I screamed to Dick.

"'Dick, your bears are killing me!' and leaped frantically around, trying to break that agonizing, clawing clinch.

"Instead of gallantly rushing out to rescue me, Dick yelled through the megaphone: 'Be brave, my girl! Don't weaken. It's the best shot of the picture.'

"So I had to lay off for a week till the scratches healed. Suzanna made a lot of money, part of which I got, and the Taylor case notoriety didn't seem to hurt it at the box-office, while Mary Miles Minter and her company finally broke her contract after a settlement. It was said at the time that they gave her three hundred and fifty thousand dollars for her million-dollar contract.

"After Suzanna was finished I went to Europe for a long rest. I returned completely cured of the things that had broken me physically and were threatening to wreck my mind.

"Over there friends introduced me to celebrities in England and on the Continent, and I had a fine time. Among the persons whose friendship began in late summer of 1922 were George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells.

"At Deauville I met Prince Ibrahim, nephew of the Khedive of Egypt, and he gave me many a laugh. When he called at my suite in Paris, whither he followed me, he was always preceded by four turbaned messengers bearing charming gifts ¾ gold scarabs and strangely wrought perfume bottles and gorgeous shawls and rugs and talismans of costly stones.

"These voiceless chaperons would stand stiffly, arms folded, in the four corners of the room while the prince and I sat on a divan in the middle and conversed. They didn't seem to cramp his style much; but the ship reporters back in New York read into our acquaintance a romance that never existed.

"I returned from Europe on the Majestic about the middle of September and stayed around New York a few weeks, visiting friends and seeing the new shows and pictures. Then I went on to Hollywood, Sennett having telephoned me that he had a fine comedy for me.

"It was a good picture, all right, and called *The Extra Girl*; but I soon found that he hadn't sent for me until he had spent an awful lot of money trying to find another comedienne to take my place. So I made him give me three thousand dollars a week and a percentage of the profits.

"Nappy had tried exactly six girls in the role before he sent for me. They were Priscilla Bonner, Sigrid Holmquist, Evelyn Brent, Betty Francisco, Virginia Browne Fair, and Phyllis Haver, all excellent actresses, but not just fitted for the role *The Extra Girl* required. Sennett had written it himself.

"Again George Nichols was my father. Anna Hernandez was the mother, and Ralph Graves had the part of my bold and dashing hero.

"In *The Extra Girl*, Dick directed for me and once more he was responsible for my being hurt. The play called for a lion, and Dick and I went out to the famous animal farm where wild beasts are trained for the movies. The man pointed out a couple of lions, but they looked moth-eaten and feeble minded to me. I kept looking around till I found Duke, a magnificent young animal. The trainer shook his head, saying that Duke was a terror, too young and not sufficiently educated for picture duty.

"But I insisted that Dick hire Duke, because we were going to use a double for the beast most of the time, dressing Teddy, Sennett's famous great Dane, in a lion's skin, and because I felt the lion tamer ought to earn his money by making his charge behave around the studio.

"I was a seamstress and slavey in the early part of the picture, and I had to associate a lot with the lion.

"One day Dick was taking a scene of the trainer leading Duke across the set. Duke seemed so docile that Dick conceived the snappy idea of having me lead him around. We had a great argument about it, but I gave in. Dick was to get a pitchfork and crouch near the camera tripod while I was to take hold of the rope and lead Duke toward him. Joe Bordeaux, who once was Fatty Arbuckle's chauffeur, and was now one of our property men, had another pitchfork and stood on the other side of the camera. It was agreed that under no circumstances was I to look back at the lion, but was to watch Dick's face and when he motioned to me, if anything happened, to leap toward him -- and he would leap toward the onrushing lion!

"I took the rope from the trainer, who had a club, and put it over my shoulder and started dragging the lion toward the camera. He followed as peacefully as a big cat slithering toward a bowl of milk. When I got close enough, Dick whispered, 'Cut,' and the scene ended. But Dick wasn't satisfied. He wouldn't be!

"'Mabel,' he said, 'the lion's going great and so are you. So we'll do it again, but this time we'll put the camera on a traveling platform and you can follow us all around the set. Joe and I will walk backward beside the camera and see you don't get hurt. Wait till we rearrange the props for a running shot.'



"We had another argument, but Dick pointed at the lazy-eyed, snout-licking brute and finally persuaded me that all was well.

"When we were all set I got the rope again and began to follow the camera around the studio. Everything probably would have gone all right, but Dick, walking backward with the pitchfork poised, had to stumble over a box and fall on his shoulder blades. The sudden movement and the clatter startled Duke, and to my horror I felt the slack in the rope taken up and there I was tugging at a crouching lion I didn't dare look back at!

"But I could see in Dick's face what was happening as he scrambled to his feet and everybody on the set started running for ladders and behind scenery -- and I never want to see another face like Dick's as he screamed to me to jump and lunge forward with his fork.

"Before I could drop the rope and move, I felt the lion's hot breath just below the small of my back and heard him cough. That terrible breath was as hot as a furnace blast. I let out one wild whoop and bounded forward like a wounded deer. Just as I hit the floor, all sprawled out near the camera platform, I felt the lion's great claws tearing at the most prominent curves of my body! Then I fainted.

"When I came to, a bit later, everybody was standing looking down at me, laughing, and making no effort at all to pick me up. I was furious, and more so when Dick, the big bromide, explained that instead of the lion's tearing the bottom out of my skirt, it was the tines of the pitchfork which he had stuck into me when he missed the confounded lion. The lion, Dick went on, had crouched the moment he saw him fall, his eyes turned green, his tail began to lash, and he fastened those narrow eyes on the part of my body where he'd have to bite deepest before reaching any bones! The trainer had leapt out with his club and clouted Duke back of the ear, and they had led him to his cage.

"The Extra Girl was finished and ready for release just before Christmas, 1923. I had been feeling quite ill during the latter part of the picture and resolved to go to a hospital for an operation immediately after the holidays. Those festive days passed pleasantly and excitingly enough, and I received many beautiful presents.

"A day or so before Christmas Edna Purviance and Courtland S. Dines came to my house. Dines was the son of a Denver millionaire oil man, and he was having a great time frolicking around the movie colony. We had met at a party some time before, and I had joined him and Edna and the other guests on his yacht and at several parties.

"When they dropped in that afternoon I was ashamed to remember that I hadn't bought a gift for him. I had a lovely big Christmas tree, and people had been coming in all day with their things for me and taking my gifts for them off the tree. So I whispered to Mamie Owens, my maid, to send Joe Kelly,<sup>239</sup> my driver, across the street to a drug store to buy Dines a couple of military brushes.

"When she handed them to me I surreptitiously put them on the tree and told Dines to stop scolding me for failing to get him something, but to look carefully again. He found the package and started to open it, but changed his mind.

"I wish he had opened it, for on so trivial a thing as his failure to do so hinged the second big scandal of my life!

"But he didn't open the package. He put it on a radiator near the tree, and when he and Edna went away after a while, he forgot it. I never thought of it till later.

"New Year's Eve Sennett gave a beautiful dinner at his home, and I was one of the guests. The next day I awoke about noon, and Mamie told me that, among others, Edna had telephoned and said she'd call again. A couple of hours later she phoned and asked me to run over to Dines apartment, at 325-B North Vermont Street, for a New Year's cup. At first I said I had other things on for the day, and reminded her that I was going to the hospital the next morning for my operation.

"But she said she and Dines had been at a wild party in the Ambassador Hotel the night before, and were feeling pretty low, and for heaven's sake to dash over and cheer them up. So, about five o'clock I had Kelly drive me up there. I told him to go back home and I'd phone Mamie when I wanted him to come for me.

"I found Dines and Edna needed cheering, and that the flat needed a lot of cleaning. So while he mixed a drink I took off my coat and grabbed a broom and a mop and a vacuum cleaner and fixed up the place. There were a lot of dishes in the sink, so I heated some water and washed them; and I emptied the ash trays and otherwise did a great maid act.

"Before long everybody felt better, and Dines began to kid me about giving him a Christmas present and then stealing it back to give to someone else. I remembered he had left it on the radiator, so I called up Mamie<sup>240</sup> and told her to send Kelly over with the package. She suggested I come on home and get a good sleep because I had to go to the hospital quite early. But I told her not to worry, that I'd be home early enough as there wasn't to be a party that night. Dines got on the phone also and spoofed her a bit.

"It came out later that this chauffeur of mine was standing at the foot of the stairs while Mamie was talking to me. He went into the living room and got the package all right, but he also sneaked upstairs to my bedroom and got a little twenty-five caliber automatic pistol out of a dresser drawer. He testified later he knew it was there because he'd seen the drawer open once when he came up to fix the connection on my electric curling iron.

"I had had this pistol for several years. Dick Jones gave it to me while we were out on location making Mickey, and they used to play a lot of jokes on me. They'd put bottles and cans on a little ledge on the side of a mountain and tell me to shoot at them. I would close my eyes, aim, and pull the trigger. There'd be a loud report and I would open my eyes to find I had broken a bottle.

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<sup>239</sup> "Joe Kelly" is, of course, Horace Greer. Joe Kelly was the false name Greer had assumed for himself, unbeknownst to Mabel, when he had come to start a new life in Los Angeles.

<sup>240</sup> Mabel states here that it was Mamie Owens who sent Greer, i.e., Kelly, over to Dines' apartment, but it was Mabel's housekeeper Edith Burns who dispatched Greer, not Mamie. That Mabel (or Sutherland) should make such an obvious mistake perhaps suggests some subsequent resentment toward Mrs. Burns. Shortly after the incident, Mabel quarreled with Mrs. Burns, and, indeed, fired her. Things were reportedly patched up afterward and Mrs. Burns was rehired. However it might be inferred from all this that Mrs. Burns was somehow responsible, at least in Mabel's eyes, for bringing about the Dines shooting. The reason for this would seem to be connected with Mrs. Burns reporting to Greer what she overheard on the phone speaking with Mabel earlier in the evening. (See *LA Examiner*, January 2, 1924 and January 13, 1924)

"I didn't understand why they always laughed, until after the thing had gone on for several days Dick explained that my gun wasn't even loaded, but that while I was aiming and pulling the trigger one of our cowboys would be standing behind me and he'd shoot the bottle just as I crooked my finger. And I had thought I was a great pistol shot! When they did load the gun and let me shoot, all I ever hit was the side of the mountain.

"Well, a little after I had talked to Mamie, Edna went into the next room to change her dress, and Dines and I sat talking about this and that. There was a knock at the door and Dines asked who it was. Kelly answered. Dines let him in. He handed the package to Dines and walked over to where I was sitting on the couch.

"Miss Normand," he said, "Mamie's worried about you. Don't you think you'd better come on home?"

"I told Mamie I'd be home a little later," I replied. "Go on down and wait in the car for me."

"Just then Dines spoke up. He was a rather hot tempered individual.

"Say, Kelly," he said, "where do you get that stuff, asking my guests to leave my house?" Get out of here and down in that machine where you belong."

"Kelly had evidently been celebrating the New Year or something after leaving me earlier, because before I could say anything, he turned on Dines with an oath, berating him for keeping me there when I was going to the hospital the next day, and swearing he wouldn't leave till I did. I started to scold him, when there was a confused lurching of bodies toward each other, an oath or two, and then three pistol shots that sounded like firecrackers.

"Kelly turned and ran, just as Edna appeared in the doorway, and Dines staggered back against the table and then fell on the floor.

"My God, Mabel!" he cried clutching his stomach, blood running between his fingers. "Can you imagine - that hophead shot me! For God's sake, you and Edna get out of here quick as lightning. Go on. Never mind me, either of you. Get out of here before the law arrives."

"Even if we had wanted to we couldn't have, for I never saw so much law in my life as showed up a second later, it seemed to me. Edna and I were trying to do something for Dines when they crashed the door in, a million plain-clothes men and uniformed policemen. Kelly had raced down to the Wilshire Boulevard police station in my car, and they had covered the thirteen blocks back to the apartment in the fastest time I ever heard of."

\* from *Liberty*, October 11, 1930

#### **Part Six -- Conclusion**

"The first thing to do was to save the life of Courtland S. Dines and then find out what all the shooting was about," said Mabel Normand, continuing the story of the wounding of her New Year's Day host by Joe Kelly, her chauffeur.

"They took Dines to the hospital and questioned Edna Purviance and me until dawn. They found Dines wasn't seriously hurt: one bullet had entered one side of his stomach, and another had grazed his head above the right ear, and the third bullet hadn't hit him.

"Kelly was locked up, and he kept repeating that he shot Dines because the latter had reached for a bottle to brain him with.

"The old bottle was right there on the lieutenant's desk as evidence. The label said it was Gaelic Old Smuggler's Scotch Whisky.

"And again the newspaper boys got busy. Among other things they dug up, the one that helped to fix the blame for the thing where it belonged, was the fact that Kelly's real name was Joe Greer; that he had escaped from a chain gang up in Oakland, California, after doing fifteen days of a sentence of a seventy-five day sentence; that some of his brothers had received life terms or died in a prison back easy; and that he was a cocaine addict.

"And, of course, I would be unlucky enough to hire a chauffeur like that!

"They tried him on a charge of assault with intent to commit murder, and Dines good-naturedly helped exonerate him. Kelly was acquitted and, I think, taken back to finish his sentence on the chain gang. Dines left town and the thing died down.

"But after I left the hospital where I was taken the morning after the shooting, I went to Europe for six or seven weeks. I needed a rest from all the excitement, and I had a good time over there.

"On my return the ship reporters rallied round and saw something significant in the fact that I was wearing a diamond-studded platinum wedding ring. But it was just a whim. I wasn't married.

"Because of the Dines scandal the release of the Extra Girl was held up, and about the end of February I made personal appearances in a number of cities with the first showing of the film. Steve O'Brien, later manager of the Jim Jeffries-Tom Sharkey vaudeville tour, had charge of my trip for Associated Exhibitors who handled the release of the picture.

"I opened in Newark, and Al Woods, the New York theatrical man, happened to be in the audience. This led, as you shall see, to my only appearance as an actress on the speaking stage.

"I next said my little piece across the footlights in Jersey City, and then in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Kansas City, Omaha, and other towns I forget. My companion of many years, Julia Brew [Julia Benson, Brew having been her former married name], went with me on the eight weeks' tour.

"In a number of cities O'Brien had arranged for the mayors to meet me at the train, and they all gave me gold keys to the city they presided over. Mayor Kendrick of Philadelphia and Mayor James Dahlman of Omaha I remember for the gorgeous bouquets they handed me.

"Mayor Keil of St. Louis made a specially gracious speech at a luncheon the clubwomen gave me, and it was through these luncheons around the country that I managed quickly to dispel the idea that I was always getting in trouble.

"At any rate, no ban ever was placed on any of my pictures because of the Taylor murder and the Dines shooting, in both of which affairs I was promptly held guiltless and no-wise responsible. And I have a lovely letter from Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt disclaiming any intent on the part of clubwomen to make life miserable for me.

"I thought the gold keys the mayors gave me were darling, and I told Julia to guard them carefully, not only because of their sentimental value but because of the precious metal in them.

"She got a great laugh out of that, and explained that they were merely wooden keys covered with gilt!

"I spent the whole summer of 1924<sup>241</sup> in Europe, and in the autumn I returned and went down to Coronado Beach to visit friends.

"One day I was riding a horse and it ran away and threw me. My left arm and collar bone were broken, and they hurried me to the Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles.

"While I was there, all wound up in plaster and tape, a Mrs. Georgia W. Church decided to sue her millionaire husband, Norman W. Church, for divorce.

"She accused him of many things, and in her petition was a paragraph in which it was said that I'd spent a lot of time visiting Mr. Church, who was quite ill in the same hospital, that I drank some of his liquor, and that I passed the time with him and the nurses by telling a lot of spicy stories.

"Inasmuch as I was unable to move because of all my bandages, a fact the hospital attaches quickly substantiated, I called up some lawyers and told them to take action against Mrs. Church. The hospital also planned to protect its reputation by proving in court that such visiting between rooms was impossible in the first place, and would not be tolerated in the second.

"The first thing I knew, my lawyers had threatened to sue the woman for five hundred thousand dollars unless she withdrew the offending paragraph from her petition.

"Well, I certainly didn't want any more attention from the press, so I at once switched lawyers and my new ones went about it less spectacularly. Mrs. Church retracted her charges involving me, and of course I declined to press libel action.

"In the spring and summer of 1925 I was in communication with British National Pictures and was about to accept a fine offer to go to England and make a lot of comedies, when Al Woods arrived in Los Angeles. He called me up and asked me to see him at Ambassador Hotel, as he had a play for me on the speaking stage.

"We conferred many times, and he said the lead in *A Kiss in the Taxi* was just the thing I'd make a hit in. I told him I was afraid I had no voice, but he said he heard me in Newark when I appeared with *The Extra Girl*, and he was positive I'd make good.

"We finally drew up a five-year contract. I was to get fifteen hundred dollars a week and ten percent of the gross receipts. In the summer I was to make pictures for him. There was a sliding scale of salary and percentage increases and an interest in my picture comedies, until I was to be getting eight thousand a week during the last year of the contract.

"But even after I signed, I was worried about my voice, so I went to see Alla Nazimova, one of my dearest friends, in her lovely home on Sunset Boulevard. She had a high wall about her estate and a great swimming pool, and when either of us was blue we'd telephone and I'd call on her and we'd have a fine time swimming and telling each other how good we were, and how misunderstood, until we felt better with ourselves and the world.

"Nazimova called herself Peter Winter, the name under which she wrote scenarios. Peter finally leased her grounds to a hotel company.

"Peter told me not to worry about my voice, that it was soft and throaty and all right, and that I'd soon learn to pitch it properly across the footlights.

"Poor Peter! She, too, walked in the shadows, Charles Bryant leaving her to marry another woman after she and Bryant had been companions for years, the world thinking them wed.

"I reached New York in August, 1925, for rehearsals. Still nervous about my voice, I called on Laurette Taylor and Willard Mack and Holbrook Blinn, all friends of mine. They reassured me, as Nazimova had done. So I took an apartment for a year and plunged eagerly into rehearsals on the stage of the Julian Eltinge theater.

"But fancy my amazement when Woods told me he wasn't going to put me in *A Kiss in the Taxi*, but had given me the lead in *The Little Mouse*. Well, I didn't know a good play from a bad one, and I supposed Woods knew what he was doing.

"Aileen King played opposite me, and was very kind in helping me learn the ropes. We opened in Hartford, Connecticut, and played Asbury Park, Atlantic City, Washington, Brooklyn, and Providence, preparatory to opening on Broadway.

"But while on the road I learned something -- that *The Little Mouse* had been a failure five times under five different names prior to its resurrection and renaming in the hope I might do something with it!

"It had been a musical comedy, then had been rewritten several times, and it had lived its feeble day and expired under the names of *Oh, Diana!* *Diana of the Movies*, *The Five o'Clock Man*, *The Blue Mouse*, and something else I forget.

"All the critics recognized the old thing and condemned it unmercifully, and in Providence I wired Woods that I refused to go on with it. He called us in. He only laughed when I scolded him for foisting the old corpse on me, and said he'd have Willard Mack write me a fine comedy.

"Mack tried, but never could get a good second act to suit any of us. He had some impossible idea of having a milk wagon drive on the stage and have me pop out of one of the big cans!

"Time went by and Woods couldn't find anything for me. I begged him to release me from the contract, insisting that my voice simply wouldn't do; but he insisted with equal fervor that my voice was all right and that he'd dig up a good play for me.

"The whole winter was wasted thus, and I pleaded with Woods again and again, telling him I was restless and unhappy and that Hal Roach wanted me to make some pictures. He finally relented and told me to skip along.

"Mary Pickford did a charming thing when Roach announced I was coming back to the movies. She wrote an open letter to me in April, 1926, which all the papers printed, and it cheered me mightily, for it had been a long time since I'd squinted my eyes under the kliegs and heard the camera whirring!

"It was largely due to Mary's efforts that Roach sent for me, because both of them knew I belonged on the screen and not on the stage. It is given to few women in this world to have such friends as I have in Mary Pickford and Norma Talmadge.

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<sup>241</sup> The dating here is incorrect. Mabel did not spend the summer of 1924 in Europe, but rather 1922. The Coronado Beach incident occurred in August 1923, not the Autumn of 1924.

"My old director in the Sennett studio, Dick Jones, was now with Hal Roach as vice president and supervisor of all productions. He signed my new contract. It was for three years -- and I was never to weigh more than one hundred and eleven pounds.

"Since I've never weighed more than a hundred, I kidded Dick quite a bit about this. The contract called for eight two-reel comedies and then eight of feature length.

"The first Roach picture I made was Raggedy Rose, directed by Dick Wallace. This was followed by One Hour Married, with Jerry Storm at the megaphone; The Nickel Hopper, with Dick Jones directing; and Should Men Walk Home? with Lee McCarey in charge.

"I know no reason why I should not have gone ahead and fulfilled my contract with Roach, save for a couple of facts -- I got married and I got pneumonia.

"The first took place in September. On the night of the fifteenth I was giving a dinner for a number of friends in my Beverly Hills home."

**Open letter from Mary Pickford April 1926**

*Welcome back to the screen, Mabel Normand! Your return makes us all happy for you have the gifts, the training, the personality and the technique  $\frac{3}{4}$  the one which is so sure that it does not show.*

*You have that rare thing, that possession above price, Mabel Normand, the charm of personality!<sup>242</sup> Ever since I first saw you on the screen I have tremendously and sincerely admired your gifts and abilities as an artist. These with your kindly heart and mind make you the screen's very own and we all are proud of your splendid work.*

*This is a wish, thus publicly expressed, for newer and bigger success to you, and it is a wish that everybody that I know sincerely shares.*

*The best o' luck, Mabel Normand, and again welcome back to the screen.*

**Mary Pickford**

"At the last minute, John Colton, who adapted Rain and the Shanghai Gesture, phoned he couldn't come. That left an empty chair, and I wondered whom I could call at that hour to occupy it.

"I thought of Lew Cody. We had been friends for more than fifteen years, since I first went into pictures while he was playing on the New York stage.

"I never knew anybody with a more priceless sense of humor, and it was on this foundation of mutual laughs that our friendship had continued all these years.

"Lew's real name is Louis Cote, and he is of French-Canadian ancestry. He was born in New England, about 1885. He had been on the stage and in pictures. He was married to Dorothy Dalton, divorced, remarried to her, and again divorced.

"I called him up and explained my predicament, and he volunteered to come over and fill out my party. Others there that night were Margaret Namara, the opera singer, and her husband, Minert Lord; Charles Ray and his wife, and one or two other couples.

"After midnight the party was going good, and Lew thought it would be a rare joke to stage an old-time melodrama proposal to me, and I thought it would be a splendid idea if we really got married after a spectacular elopement.

"I'd never thought seriously of marrying anybody in my life -- and one or two nice chaps have asked me to. Probably the novelty of Lew's magnificently worded proposal appealed to me. At any rate, I said all right.

"Lew is quite a master of ceremonies, so he got busy while we all celebrated enthusiastically. He called up his friend, the chief of police of Beverly Hills, and explained things.

"The chief offered us an escort of honor and sent over a couple of motorcycle officers.

"Margaret and Minert and Lew and I climbed into my car and, preceded by the exploding motorcycles, raced eighty miles away through the night to Ventura County, where we arrived in a couple of hours.

"There we awoke the county recorder, Judge Thomas H. Meilandt, and he pulled some pants over his pajamas and spoke the ceremony in his living room, his eighteen-year-old daughter, Ruth, acting as one of the witnesses, the rest of his family taking turns at a keyhole to see us made one. I was quite dazed and nervous over this drastic change in my life.

"Then we returned to Beverly Hills, and Lew left me at my house while he went on to the Hollywood Bowl, where he was to be master of ceremonies at a feed the Breakfast Club was having.

"As he approached the microphone to begin his stuff, somebody asked him why he was late, and he casually mentioned that he had just married Mabel Normand, the radio spreading the news to such parts of the world as happened to be tuned in on that wavelength.

"Later Lew returned to his home on Maple Drive, also in Beverly Hills.

"I went back to the studio, but it wasn't long before Dick and I broke our contract by mutual consent. I didn't feel like working, and when one isn't happy on cannot work. At least I can't.

"In January, 1927, I became ill with bronchial trouble and in February they took me to the Santa Monica Hospital, where double pneumonia came along to keep me company. I remained there nearly ten weeks, and I spent the summer and fall trying to convalesce. It has been a long hard climb, but I think my physicians are persuaded that I am at last on the way to health.

"When I do come back physically, I intend to return to the pictures, and I hope to do some lovely things in the modern vogue of comedies. The day of the rough and tumble and slapstick seems to have passed, and I should like to find some genuine fun in the comedies they are writing today. If I am lucky, I hope again to make the world laugh as I once did.

"But even if I discover some really glorious stories of the kind I want, I'm afraid that never again will the world find such things to laugh at as it used to find when Charlie Chaplin and Roscoe Arbuckle and Ford Sterling and Charles Murray and I made our comedies together."

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<sup>242</sup> Another version of this letter has "spontaneity" in place of "personality."

Mabel Normand thus wound up the story of her career, as she told it to me in the fall of 1927. Since her death it has occurred to me that there are many things one cannot tell about one's self.

For example, how the radio broadcasting stations of southern California were wont to end their nightly programs with, "Good night, friends. And to you, Mabel Normand, out there in the hospital, good night. Get well soon, Mabel, and make some more comedies for us."

It was the comedienne's practice for years on each of her trips across the continent to telegraph ahead to the Santa Fe Railway's station master at Albuquerque.

He would meet her and remove the flowers with which her Hollywood friends had filled her drawing-room, and take them to the hospitals in Albuquerque to cheer the tuberculosis patients there.

The world knew Mabel Normand as a peerless comedienne and a young woman who walked in the shadows of great scandals. Southern California, which loved her, and the picture industry, which acclaimed her the finest artist film comedy had discovered, knew her as a brilliant, accomplished, widely read woman who played the piano with the finish of a concert-stage artist, who wrote little books of exquisite poetry for private distribution.

They knew that her great drawing-room in the beautiful home she owned was the Mecca for artists and writers and other celebrities from all the world; that she was wealthy beyond need of future worry.

They also knew she had some of the most lovely and expensive jewelry in the movie colony; that she was lavish in her generousities, doctors and hospitals and florists finding their bills paid when her friends were in need; that the poor families on her never exploited pension list were numbered by the dozen; that charities never turned uncared for from her door.

And they knew, and gladly had more friends than any woman in pictures; that her standard as a comedienne never has been equaled; that men and women now at the top of the profession owe to her more than any other star the help and counsel they needed when they were at the foot of the ladder.

And, finally, that if Mabel Normand was an outlaw at heart, impatient over routine and convention and social restraints, nevertheless that wild heart never harbored an unkind or ungenerous feeling.

From January, 1928, after she and Cody again lived together, Mabel fought gallantly against tuberculosis that her physicians foresaw was to be fatal. Late in 1929 she was taken to a hospital in Monrovia, near the edge of the desert, and there she lay for months, her room filled with flowers sent by friends, with her faithful companion, Julia, answering hundreds of telegrams that came.

On February 23 last, she turned her head on her pillow, closed her eyes, sighed and went to sleep forever. As the coffins of kings and queens are escorted to the grave by their royal peers, so was Mabel's casket accompanied to its tomb by Charlie Chaplin, D. W. Griffith, Douglas Fairbanks, Roscoe Arbuckle, Mary Pickford, Norma Talmadge, and others -- all sovereigns in their careers, walking beside the coffin of the little Madcap they knew and loved.

\* from *New Movie Magazine*, April 1931

#### **Hollywood's Hall of Fame: Mabel Normand**

By Herbert Howe

... Probably the writer's definition of the greatest personality would be the one who supplies the best copy, the most interesting from a story angle, be he saint or devil, mental giant or movie magazine writer.

That which issues from the mouth of man is but a fraction of his personal expression. A person may be fascinating and yet give a punk interview. "Interview" is a misnomer, anyhow. Usually it is just a bleating.

... Although in the past I have used the word "soul" many times like a sloven writer, I confess I do not know what it is. I seem to have a clearer idea of "heart." Perhaps the two are synonymous. Certainly greatness of heart seems to me to be the greatest ingredient for lasting charm. That is why Mabel Normand is first with me.

I had heard a lot about Mabel before meeting her. Everyone always heard a lot about Mabel. I did not think I would care much for her. A practical joker, according to stories, she liked to shock in burlesque fashion. Typically Irish, I was told. Impulsive, wild-tongued. In fact, from the hearsay picture, I gathered that Mabel was a hoyden, and from a hoyden I will run as from battle.

One afternoon I went with Adela Rogers St. Johns to Mahlon Hamilton's for cocktails before attending the premiere of "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse." That was years before Hollywood was scandalously headlined. There were a number of people in the drawing-room, among them several stars but no one particularly exciting. Suddenly I had the feeling that an arc lamp was flooding the room. I turned toward the door and saw a girl dressed in black, a large black hat shadowing her face, a string of tiny pearls around her throat. In her arm she carried several books which she evidently was returning. She came into the room with the shy step of a country cousin, and I noted she was pigeon-toed. Several people spoke to her but I did not get her name and no one took the trouble to introduce me. They didn't need to; I naturally gravitated. Almost at once I was immersed in the eloquence of dark eyes. I do not know whether I thought her beautiful. I was too far sunk for trivial observations.

I must have had a gaspy look, for she gave me a sort of resuscitating smile and asked me if I had read the books which she placed on a table, and did I like Stephen Leacock.

I said I was sure I would--if given a chance.

"Let me send you this one," she said. "And there is another I think you will like. Will you give me your name and address?" I gave.

It would be impossible for me to say how long we talked. I think Einstein's theory of relativity might apply, but as to that I am not clear. Anyhow I had the feeling of having known her much longer than time. She left as shyly as she had come, giving me an amused smile and offering her hand. (Curious how little details bob up in memory: I recall her telling me later that people were always giving her gloves which she detested and never wore.)

As soon as she had gone I galloped to Adela: "Who is she?--I'm crazy--"

"Don't be so original," boomed the unpitying Adela. "Everyone is crazy about her who ever knew her. Don't tell me you haven't recognized her! She is Mabel Normand."

Well, as Texas Guinan once exclaimed when similarly shocked, "I didn't know whether to commit suicide or sing 'Baby Shoes.'"

Incredible as it may seem, I was not at that time a fan for Mabel's pictures. And I am one of the rare souls who never recognizes a star off the screen.

I went on to the premiere of "The Four Horsemen" but I couldn't seem to keep my mind on the picture. It seemed disjointed. I was the only reviewer who failed to hail Rex Ingram a genius, and so Rex engaged me to do his publicity and we became very good friends.

Thus I came under Mabel Normand's fatal spell which started operating immediately to my benefit.

A few days later the Leacock books arrived with several stories marked.

M. Jomier, the favorite French instructor of Hollywood, was in my apartment that afternoon. We had started to talk French but soon lapsed into an English discussion of Mabel. I found he was among those obsessed like myself. We were talking of Mabel when the telephone rang.

"Do you know who this is?" asked the voice.

"Yes," I said.

"Why, you big liar!"

"Thank you for the books," I said.

"How did you know my voice?--Listen will you do something for me?"

"Everything."

"Not that. I don't know you well enough. But will you do my publicity? They are raising the devil with me down here at the studio."

"Everything but that," I laughed. "I know you too well for that—"

I meant that I knew her reputation for loathing publicity. She ran from it like a frightened child from a willow switch. It was a bitter fate that crushed her with headlines later. When now I think of her terrific aversion I wonder if it was not a premonition. She would elude interviewers with the agility of a quarried rabbit. When caught by one she would invariably beguile him into babbling of himself, and he would leave with only a rapturous impression. This was not design on her part. She had a voracious interest in people. She would rather hear a life story than tell one. Naturally sympathetic, her instinct was for liking everyone. I recall one interviewer calling in the throes of a flu-cold. Mabel made him take a hot foot-bath, gave him a toddy, bundled him up in one of her fur coats and sent him home in the care of her chauffeur.

My friendship with Mabel was extraordinary so far as I am concerned, but there are countless others who can testify as I do. We know she had friends everywhere, but we did not realize how many until she died. Messages came from all parts of the world. A wealthy woman in New York, prominent in society here and abroad, wrote that she had arranged for a mass to be said every month, perpetually, for the eternal rest of Mabel. I visited an Italian orphanage where the children offer their daily prayers for her. Next to me at her funeral a boy in threadbare clothes sobbed convulsively throughout the service. No one seemed to know who he was. No one, for that matter, knows how many partook of "the great heart of Mabel." I gained a faint idea when I met her Father Confessor. I quote him when I say, "The great heart of Mabel."

Mabel was endowed with intuition amounting to clairvoyance. Through her own suffering sensitiveness she understood people.

On my return from a European trip six or seven years ago, she said, "I bet you miss the good wines over there."

I confessed I did.

"Listen, my dear," she said. "You must drink none of this stuff over here. God knows I am not a preacher or prohibitionist. My friends are welcome to drink as they choose. But I have taken a pledge."

Appreciating Mabel's humor, I laughed.

"Are you a Catholic?" she asked suddenly.

"No," I said, "but I went to school with Catholic boys."

"I am a Catholic," laughed Mabel, "but don't hold that against the church. There are good and bad in all religions. God love them all! I am not bigoted. But there is one priest who is a miracle-worker. He saved my life, God love him. I wish you would let me introduce you to Father Chaippa [Chiappa?], a very old Italian priest. You like Italians, don't you? Well, Father Chaippa is so saintly that when you meet him you will feel you are entering heaven. Lord knows whether you will ever feel that way hereafter, so you'd better meet him."

"I would like to."

"Really?" She seemed astonished.

"Really."

"He won't lecture you or ask you to take the pledge. He will just talk to you and make you love him. You can tell him all your sins and he will never spill the beans."

"How old is he?"

"Seventy-two."

"He wouldn't have time to hear them all."

Mabel laughed: "Will you go tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow."

"I don't believe you a bit. I shall call you."

The next day we went to Loyola to see Father Chaippa. Mabel entered first, "to prepare him," she said, "as a sudden shock might kill him."

She came out throwing kisses at the old priest who protested with upraised hands, "Mabel! Mabel!"

I entered the little office and talked with Father Chaippa, a man of Christ-like gentleness over whom the earth no longer had power. When he died a few months before Mabel, I felt I had lost an unfailing friend. Such is the instant power of fine personality.

Mabel was waiting for me in her car when I came out. She could scarcely restrain her excitement and the devil was in her eyes.

"Did you like him?" she demanded.

"Of course I liked him."

"What did he say? Did he scold you? I hope he did. He didn't ask for money, now did he?"

"Certainly not."

"But you gave him some. I can tell. Now didn't you?"

"A little for your Italian orphanage."

"Why, I'll never speak to you again. How much did you give him?"

I told her.

"Well, of all the--! I shall never forgive you as long as I live. You can't afford it. I am surprised Father Chaippa would take it."

"He didn't. I left it on the prie-dieu. I happened to pry some of your secrets out of him. I learned you had built a wing on that orphans' home."

"It isn't true," said Mabel. "But tell me, what happened?"

"I took the pledge for three months."

"You are not telling the truth! What did you do?"

"I knelt down—"

"Let me see your knees!" Mabel bent over and regarded the knees of my trousers on which there were circles of dust. "Well, of all--! Wait until Mamie [Owens] hears this!"

Mabel bounced up and down on the seat, rapped on the window for the chauffeur to drive faster and squealed with unseemly glee.

Mamie was Mabel's old white-haired Irish maid, a devout Catholic, whose devotion to Mabel was only matched by Mabel's love for her over a period of many years.

"Mamie! Mamie!" screamed Mabel, throwing her arms around her maid when we had entered the house. "Mamie, Herb has been to Father Chaippa and taken the pledge. Can you beat that? Mamie, have you a drink to give him? He deserves one."

"Shame on you, Mabel," said Mamie. "An' God bless you Mishter Howe."

"Well, anyhow, I shall buy you a lunch at my Italian friend's across the street," said Mabel.

We crossed the street to a restaurant where Mabel was received by the proprietor with genuflections such as are given the Madonna.

"This Italian is a wonderful fellow," said Mabel in an awed whisper. "I gave him five hundred dollars when he was going broke and, do you know, he paid me back!"

I had never seen Mabel in all her variety as she was during that lunch of five hours. She told me most of her life story. Mabel was the perfect clown. She could have you in tears of one sort or another all the time. I wonder what became of all those diaries into which Mabel scribbled her poems of joy and sorrow. I read some of them. They had the beauty of things not done for recognition. She could only show me a few. I think she must have destroyed them. The beauty of her inner self abashed her, she was so conscious of her failings. And yet I know no one of such beautiful accomplishments.

I could fill the whole bookshelf with anecdotes of Mabel. I do not want to speak of the world's misjudgment of her. It was the pain that killed her. Father Chaippa could have written her true story. He belonged to the Society of Jesus.

## APPENDIX C

*The following passages concerning Mabel were taken from Samuel Goldwyn's 1923 autobiography, Behind the Screen. Because the book has been long out of print, and because it contains some unique insights on Mabel, and those from someone who was very close to her, relevant portions of it are worth including in this volume. A. Scott Berg in his Goldwyn: A Biography states, however, that "Goldwyn contributed little to his 236-page autobiography," and that the vast majority of the work was put together by author Corinne Lowe.<sup>243</sup> While this is presumably true, Berg does not speak at much length as to what anecdotes can be directly attributed to Goldwyn and which originated with others. At least some of what is said about Mabel probably came from Abraham Lehr, Goldwyn studio executive in charge of production; since some of what is reported here is later repeated in Sidney Sutherland's interview with Lehr for the Liberty magazine article "Madcap Mabel." This said, there is no reason to automatically assume that none of what is stated about Mabel in Behind the Screen did not originate with Goldwyn himself. Indeed, it would be somewhat strange if this were so; given their one time intimate relationship and the close affection he was known to have had for her. As always, readers, in any case, can judge for themselves.*

Among producers, of a very different type, who had been waxing strong during these first years of our development, was Mack Sennett. Sennett, originally a chorus man earning five dollars a day, had been associated with Griffith in the old Biograph studios. From these he departed with only about five or six hundred dollars, and he produced his first films without any studio at all. The cameraman overcame this fundamental lack by focusing on people's front lawns and on any other part of the landscape which looked appealing. When at last his financial returns justified it Sennett established a studio near Los Angeles.

Mack's specialty had always been comedies, and among his early stars was that noted screen comedian of another day, Ford Sterling. At the time when the Lasky Company started, Sterling was getting a salary phenomenal for that period. Yet, being a perfectly normal star, he kept wanting more, and it was in an hour when Sennett feared he would not be able to keep pace with these increasing demands that he cast about him for some one to take Sterling's place.

In this period of vigilance he chanced to go to Pantages' in Los Angeles. Among the acts of this performance, which represented the second circuit -- that employing the less costly talent of the organization -- there lingered in his mind the work of one comedian.

Months afterwards when Sterling really seemed on the point of leaving, Sennett thought immediately of the little comedian in the second circuit. He did not know where he was. He could not even remember his name. But he wired to an Eastern representative, "Get in touch with fellow called Chapman or Chamberlain -- something like that -- playing second circuit."

The representative had a hard time locating the person thus vaguely defined. At last, however, in a little Pennsylvania town the agent caught up with Charlie Chaplin. He was getting fifty dollars a week for his work in vaudeville, and when Sennett took him on at one hundred and twenty-five he seemed stunned by his good fortune.

And did he make good at once in motion pictures? Mack told me that he did not.

"It was days and days," the latter relates, "before Charlie put over anything real. He tried all sorts of make-ups -- one of them I remember was a fat man -- and they were all about equally flat. The fact of it was that for some time I felt a little uneasy as to whether my find was a very fortunate one."

It must be remembered at this point, however, that Chaplin encountered at the outset of his screen career an almost inflexible conception of humor. He himself has told me how he had to combat this prejudice in creating his very first picture.

"I was a tramp in that story," he recalls, "and they wanted me to do all the usual slap-stick stunts. I had to beg them to let me play the part my way. 'If you want somebody to pull all the old gags,' I said to Sennett, 'why do you hire me? You can get a man at twenty-five dollars to do that sort of stuff.' So at last they gave in to my idea. This I had worked out very carefully. A tramp in a fine hotel -- there's a universal situation for you. Hardly a human being that hasn't duplicated the feeling of being poor, alone, out of touch with the gay crowd about him, of trying to identify himself somehow with the fine, alien throng. So I did the little touches here of imitation -- the pulling down of shabby cuffs, the straightening of my hat, all the gestures that gave a wide meaning to the characterization."

Chaplin's own account of his start is eloquent of the creative imagination which has made him the supreme exponent of screen art. The first picture was a success. Even so, there were those in the Sennett studios who looked askance upon such advanced methods.

"They didn't really appreciate Charlie in those early days," so Mabel Normand has often said to me. "I remember numerous times when people in the studio came up and asked me confidentially, 'Say, do you think he's so funny? In my mind he can't touch Ford Sterling.' They were just so used to slapstick that imaginative comedy couldn't penetrate."

When Chaplin went out to California to make his first pictures he found the pantomimist just quoted a star in the Sennett organization. After having been a model for Gibson and other noted illustrators, Mabel had worked with Mary Pickford and Blanche Sweet in the Biograph studios. She was still here when Sennett, meeting her on the street one day, said, "How about going to California at one hundred dollars a week? I've just got some backing for my company and I'm going to settle out there in a short time."

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<sup>243</sup> The racy drug stories about Mabel contained in Berg's book, incidentally, are classic examples of gross rumor and hearsay presented as learned history. Berg also makes reference to the article in a "family magazine" in which Mabel reportedly called Mary Pickford a "prissy bitch." While I have heard often about this quote and article, I myself have yet to ever see it. If it does actually exist, perhaps a good someone will send me a copy (with citation). Pickford was very praising of Mabel, publicly supported her comeback in 1926, expressed at times a desire to emulate her character, and did much to protect the Normand family in their testate litigations after Mabel's death. That Mabel should have spoken of her this way attributed then seems rather unlikely.



Mabel had been rendered incredulous by her salary at the Biograph. She was so skeptical of there being any such salary as a hundred dollars a week that Sennett's backers, to whom he had referred her, thought she was hesitating because of the insufficiency of the recompense. They thereupon offered her twenty-five dollars more.

Not long ago my friend Edgar Selwyn, the theatrical producer and playwright, said to me: "We hear so much about our successful stars as they are today. Yet most of us are a great deal more curious to hear the details of their earlier years." With this in mind I am devoting a short space to the Sennett studio of a former time, for, although these days did not come under my direct observation, they have been described to me so often by Mabel Normand and Chaplin and Sennett himself that they seem almost like a portion of my own experience. Certainly, too, such flash-backs are necessary to a complete participation in the stories of my own immediate contracts with these two stars.

The older Sennett studio, like the stable which first cradled the Lasky Company, presented a striking contrast to the modern film background with its meticulous divisions of labor, its attempts to introduce the efficiency methods of a business establishment. Everybody knew everybody else; all the performers talked over in the most intimate fashion the details of the day's work; the stars could and did do all such chores as cutting films.

Instead of a honeycomb of dressing rooms, there was a communal space where all the men put on their make-up; as to Mabel's dressing room, this was a crude, boarded cubicle with the oil-stove familiar to all the old-timers in California studios. Altogether, an atmosphere informal and light-hearted as that which we imagine surrounding a group of strolling players in Elizabethan times!

Every one knows the long rainy seasons which in California interrupt those months of brilliant, unflagging sunshine. During such times the rain would drip ceaselessly from the roof of Sennett's projection room, and his actors, shivering from the cold dampness, used to gather together after the day's work around the one cozy spot in the studio - the oil-stove in Mabel's dressing room. Here, by the hour Chaplin, a slender little fellow of twenty-two or three, attired unvaryingly in a checked suit, used to sit and talk with Mabel about work, books, and life. They were great pals, these two, and whenever Charlie wanted a raise he would go to Mabel and say, "Come now, you ask Mack for me."

Sometimes according to those who worked with the pair, the friendship was invaded by a little feeling of rivalry, especially on Chaplin's part. This was hardly strange, for Mabel's talent as a comedienne was undoubted, and to this gift she added exceptional beauty. Of course the sentiment was only fleeting, but every now and then something would bring it to the surface.

One day when Chaplin entered the studio he found Mabel standing beside the camera. Running over to Sennett, he asked the producer what it all meant.

"Oh, nothing," replied Mack. "Only I've asked Mabel to direct you today."

Chaplin said nothing, but for an hour or so he was quite evidently ruffled. Before the end of the day, however, all irritation had vanished in the boxing-bout which represented the favorite muscular outlet of the two young comedians.

Charlie and Mabel, as will be remembered, appeared in many comedies together. One of their scenes which the public was never permitted to share involved a motor-cycle. On being asked if he could ride this vehicle Charlie had replied promptly that he could.

"Now you're sure you know how, Charlie?" Sennett inquired of him again as on the day the scene was to be taken he confronted the comedian with this modern mechanism.

"Why, of course I do," maintained Charlie stoutly, "I used to cycle all about London." With no apparent trepidation he mounted the cycle. Mabel jumped on behind him. An instant afterward those watching the performance saw the two riders whirling down a steep hill with a fury that made a nor'easter look cool and collected.

"Talk about Jock Gilpin's ride!"<sup>244</sup> laughs Mabel today as she tells the story. "I knew from the moment we set out that Charlie hadn't the least idea in the world how to guide or stop that machine, and as the trees and hills whizzed by us I closed my eyes. My only wonder was when and how badly. At last it happened. When I opened my eyes again it was from a long unconscious state. I had been dashed into a ditch at the side of the road, and a little farther on they found the souvenirs of poor Charlie. You see," she concludes, "he hadn't realized that there was any difference between a cycle and a motor-cycle."

Just a little farther on I shall pick up the thread of Miss Normand's career where it became interwoven with my own professional interests. In the meanwhile closing these glimpses of the Sennett studio in its early days, I shall proceed to develop in the Lasky Company...

Well, I left my company and I was then not quite thirty-five years of age. I was accustomed to a life where every working hour was inspired by the one thought, "How can I make the Lasky Company more significant?" You can imagine, therefore, the terrible blankness of those days following my resignation. Feverishly I cast about me for a new outlet for my organizing energy, and in the Autumn of 1916 I, together with my friends Archie and Edgar Selwyn, the theatrical producers, Margaret Mayo, and Arthur Hopkins, the theatrical producer, founded the Goldwyn Motion Picture Company.

The beginning of this second film venture of mine involved conditions very different from those which attended the start of the Lasky company three years before. Then the story was supreme and the Lasky Company was successful without any really overshadowing personalities. True, the field presented some great celebrities such as Mary Pickford, but the emphasis was not placed upon the player to the degree which afterward swayed the producer. Constantly this emphasis became more irresistible, and by the time that I started the Goldwyn Company it was the player, not the play, which was the thing.

Every theatre-owner in the country wanted personalities. Stars were now made over night. New names came out in electric light almost every evening. Obviously, therefore, the only guarantee for the success of a new motion-picture organization was the assemblage of a list of big names.

Hence it was upon an array of planets that the Goldwyn Company concentrated its initial energy. The first star we engaged was Mabel Normand; the second, Mae Marsh; the third, Madge Kennedy. Add to these such towering

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<sup>244</sup> A reference to the satirical poem of that title by 18<sup>th</sup> century English poet William Cowper.

figures from other histrionic firmaments as Mary Garden, Jane Cowl, and Maxine Elliott, and you will see why our competitors were warranted in feeling a deep uneasiness. For the engagement of these people was attended by enormous publicity. Newspapers featured many of our stellar connections and, added to this, huge posters blazoned with the names of our trophies carried promise of greatness to every hamlet in America. The first thing that I did, in fact, was to scatter these posters broadcast.

Perhaps at first I did not quite realize that in building up the Lasky name I had been in reality creating a Frankenstein. Later, however, the full force of this figure was to occur to me, for at every turn I was met by the ruthless competition of the Famous Players-Lasky Company. This was particularly acute in the engagement of stars.

Added to the obstruction of bitter rivalry came a personal misfortune. While playing hand-ball at the Athletic Club one day I broke my ankle. This kept me away from our studio for three months and, as my associates were inexperienced in picture production, my absence meant a loss to the company of thousands of dollars. It was, indeed, a maddening situation for one attempting to launch a new business where the odds were already sufficiently against him.

It would seem as if the Greek dramatists had not overdrawn things. When the gods decide they want to make things hard for you, they are thorough, they overlook no executive detail. The first Goldwyn film was just being released when America announced her participation in the War. Heretofore the conflict had spelled advantage rather than disaster to the American producer, inasmuch as our films had become the rage in all neutral countries. But with America's precipitation came a new set of conditions. These, oppressive enough to picture industries long established, almost succeeded in crushing our new venture.

First on the list were transportation difficulties. We were now unable to procure space on ships to move our products. This handicap was accompanied by shortage of fuel, conservation of light, and scarcity of labor. The second obstacle of this group became so acute that we were sometimes obliged to use four studios in order to complete a day's production. Obviously, therefore, our only chance of survival lay in removing our establishment from the Fort Lee studio, where we had been operating, to a California one. This we did in the Summer of 1918.

Somewhat less than two years after America's entrance into the War our pay-roll was ninety thousand dollars. How to meet it -- here was the question which tortured every waking hour. At last I felt it incumbent upon me, as the largest single stockholder in the company, and as the individual in our group personally responsible for loans amounting to eight or nine hundred thousand dollars, to lay the whole situation frankly before my associates. With one accord they advised that the company should go into the hands of a receiver.

I could not sleep that night when everything which I had been building for the past years threatened to go down with the morrow. Money, credit, my reputation as a producer -- how, how was I to save them? Spent by my vigil I arrived in my office the next morning.

Here after a talk with Mr. Schay, the controller of our company, it seemed to me that the one reprieve of which I had thought during the night was really available. The reprieve was this. Each branch represented two or three thousand dollars of ready money. By removing the total amount from all of them we should be enabled to meet one week's pay-roll.

"And how about next week?" asked the controller.

I shrugged my shoulders. But inside I was thinking fiercely that something had to happen....

One day, while receivership was threatening, Mabel Normand came up to my desk and handed me a long envelope. "What is this?" I asked her.

"My Liberty bonds," she answered. "There are only fifty thousand dollars worth of them, but if they will tide you over you may have them."

Those interested in the personality of Mabel Normand can receive no more illuminating introduction to her than the incident just sketched. There are a hundred tales of this characteristic response to any human appeal clustering about the name of Mabel Normand. One which came directly under my observation relates to a poor girl with a dependent family. The girl was stricken with tuberculosis and, although Mabel did not know her, she became interested in her condition through a friend of hers. Immediately she went to see her, and when she left she pressed something into the sick girl's hand. It was only after she had gone that the other realized what her caller had left. It was a check for a thousand dollars.

Nor does Mabel wait for the large demand upon her sympathy. Gifts from her come unprovoked as manna. She is likely to go out and buy a hundred dollar beaded bag for a stenographer in the organization, and just as likely to invest a corresponding amount in remembering somebody whom she has met once and happened to like.

I used to find it very hard to get Mabel to a set when the set was early in the morning. Extras and other members of the cast would have been waiting there for hours. The director would be fuming. At last somebody would be sent to investigate the whereabouts of the missing luminary. More than likely she would be found writing letters in her dressing-room.

"But I don't feel in the humour this morning," she would sometimes say to me, pleadingly. "How can I go down there and act that way?"

My associate, Mr. Abraham Lehr, made frequent attempts to correct this habit of Mabel's. He found himself forever frustrated -- indeed disarmed -- by the charm of manner, the delightful playfulness which Mabel possesses so abundantly.

Once, I remember, when she was exceptionally tardy, Lehr, met her in the studio with his face fixed in lines of righteous indignation. She approached him with one hand behind her back and the other uplifted in a gesture of the gayest, most irresistible command.

"Wait," cried she, "before you say anything!"

With that she brought forward a new and very beautiful photograph of herself and presented it to him with a curtsy. On the photographs were written these lines:

Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
When I'm late  
I think of you.

She watched him while he read these words and then, her big brown eyes dancing with merriment, she said coaxingly: "That's the reason I was late, you see. I was thinking something nice to write on your photograph. I didn't want to say just 'Yours sincerely,' or something stupid like that."

I do not need to say that Lehr's face softened perceptibly or that he forgot all about the judicial rebuke which he had evidently planned. For the pictured collection of stage and screen celebrities which he had mounted under the glass top of his office-desk represents a hobby, and this contribution of Mabel's still occupies an honored place in the gallery.

I do not mean for a moment to convey the idea that Miss Normand is an isolated example of tardiness. Many screen favorites heave in sight as slowly as "Lohengrin's" swan. This is particularly true of comedians. Chaplin, for example, often keeps his associates waiting for hours -- indeed, there are days when he is absolutely unable to work. The fact is that the efficiency engineer will never be able to control a picture studio.

Such an expectation is as vain as the belief that you could obtain a poet's best work by snapping your fingers over him and crying, "Come, come, we want another sonnet and a gross of couplets before lunch." For the best screen acting is naturally inspirational.

True, some performers are able to turn on their emotional faucets at any time. Mary Pickford, as I have related, rings up early every morning. But then she is a systematized human being who presents in temperament the opposite pole from Mabel Normand. The latter is a creature of impulse. She never calculates the moment ahead for fear that the moment itself might calculate something she liked better. When she works she works hard, but she can't do it in step with the hour-hand.

Mabel has a really fine talent and she knows picture production from every angle. But the screen does not absorb all her amazing vitality. Eagerly she turns to people, books, gaiety, strange scenes. She does not want to miss one glint of "this dome of many colored glass."

The difference of degree in the attitude of Mary Pickford to pictures and that of Mabel Normand is indicated by their varying responses to European travel. Chaplin once said to a friend of mine, "You know, I was in Paris with Doug and Mary and often they really seemed lost without their pictures." Far from this state of mind, so familiar in the American business man temporarily implicated with a gondola or a ruined temple, is the eagerness with which Mabel Normand returned last Autumn from her first trip abroad.

"Oh, how I enjoyed every minute of it!" she told me. "Pictures, music, all the funny outdoor cafes, all the funny people!"

She has always been an inveterate reader. This, of course, is at present one of the fashionable claims of the screen star, and in some cases I am obliged to say that the claim rests on very flimsy foundations. Right here, indeed, I feel compelled to anticipate by telling a story illustrative of this point:

One day Charlie Chaplin went with me to a Los Angeles hospital where a friend of mine was recuperating. Left alone in the corridor, he wandered into a sitting room. It was filled with books representing the most advanced taste in fiction, poetry, and criticism.

"Whose room is this?" asked Chaplin of the nurse hovering over the scene.

Quite evidently she did not recognize him, for she replied without a vestige of embarrassment, "Oh, this belongs to Mrs. Mildred Harris Chaplin."

Charlie's face underwent a number of changes.

"Oh, indeed? And is she reading these books," he finally inquired.

"Oh, no," returned the nurse in a matter of fact tone. "The books she really reads are in a little closet in her bedroom."

Mabel Normand, however, does not regard books merely for their furnishing value. She really gets into action on "literachoor."

Many people who are generous with money and material possessions are not equally so when it comes to that more difficult gift of time and thought. No such limitations exists in Mabel's nature. The thing which makes her beloved is that going out of herself to others, that real love of people irradiating her most casual contact.

Once, I remember, she was eating lunch in the Goldwyn studio restaurant. The apple pie struck her as being especially successful and she asked to see the cook. A few moments later this functionary, an ample old Irishwoman in a gingham apron and with her sleeves rolled up, appeared behind the counter. Visibly she was overcome with awe at the summons from the brilliant star. It did not take Mabel long to remove such oppressive sentiments. Only a moment and she literally vaulted over the counter and had grabbed the astounded old woman in her arms.

"Bless your heart," we heard her cry, "it's the best apple-pie I've had since I left home." And as she left the scene she tucked one of her inveterate bills into the cook's hand.

Nor is her response to people merely an emotional one. It is practical as well. She keeps a book in which are written the birthdays of all her friends, and she never fails to react to these dates with a letter, a telegram, or a gift.

It was when she was in the Goldwyn studio that the death of Olive Thomas occurred in Paris. Never have I seen such a passion of pity as Mabel showed for the unfortunate girl, such a passion of indignation as she expressed for those whom she believed responsible for the tragedy. Nor did she stop there. The mother of Olive Thomas was in this country and there was hardly a day when Mabel did not go to see her or take her on a drive or send her some remembrance.

To a nature like this, so alive with human sympathy and understanding, it is easy to forgive much.

There was one person from whom, so I always suspected, Mabel withheld much of her usual kindness. This was Madge Kennedy. I had engaged the latter actress soon after making my contract with Mabel and the two worked simultaneously, therefore, in the Fort Lee studio. That they did not always work harmoniously is scarcely puzzling, for the fact that they were both comedienues represented perhaps the only likeness between them. Indeed, that very similarity constituted in itself a ground for conflict.

They each had the habit of slipping into the projection room to look at the rushes of the other. And the comment with which they greeted the rival performances became fairly familiar to the studio.

"Hmph," announced Mabel to her group, "she saw me do it and she quickly did it first."

"Hmph," duplicated Madge to her group, "she saw me do it and she quickly did it first!"

Mabel behind the screens is as full of pranks as she is on screen. Madge Kennedy's professional manner, on the contrary, is decorous to the point of primness.

My contract with Mabel Normand contained one clause providing that she should pay half for the clothes worn in her stories and that the company should pay the other half. Time went by, however, and brought us no bill from the star for our share of her stage wardrobe.

"How's this," I asked her one day.

She looked embarrassed. "Well, you see," she replied, "I've ordered so many clothes that I don't feel right about letting you pay anything at all."

It was quite true. She did order lavishly. Instead of buying one hat at a time she bought twelve. With frocks and other accessories it was the same. To be sure, there are other stars who expenditures in this direction are equally impressive. Pauline Frederick, for example, once got an exemption of fifty-thousand dollars from her income tax on the basis of an investment of that amount in her wardrobe. I am sure, however, that only a few of this number would have been halted by any such scruples as those revealed by Mabel Normand.

## APPENDIX D

### The William Desmond Taylor Case

*"Before we can make any accurate speculations of the causes and guilt of those involved we must know something of the community in which the victim lived and in which he died. It is my first contention that the murder itself and its consequent lack of solution had its roots deeply buried in the inner character of the community. I am convinced of this. I was there!"*

~ King Vidor, private papers

The murder of Paramount film director William Desmond Taylor in Feb. 1922 had not only an impact of crucial importance on Mabel Normand's life, but on Hollywood, and, in turn, the nation itself. Since taking place, there have and will probably never cease to be baffling mysteries surrounding the case, not least of which, of course, the identity of the killer. Despite this, it is not impossible on the basis of what evidence there is available to reconstruct a plausible scenario that might *better* explain most, if not all, of what happened -- this thanks in no small part due to the priceless and prodigious research of first King Vidor, and later Taylor specialist, Bruce Long. What follows here is an attempt at such. This is not to say that all or any particular of what is offered as explanation is necessary to account for what happened, but only that it is as likely an accounting as any heretofore to come forward. Most especially when dealing with something as puzzling and difficult as the Taylor mystery, it is, needless to say, possible that I am entirely wrong on a given point of speculation or surmise. So that this admitted, I am more than happy to be introduced to new facts and or compelling counter arguments. Whether such are forthcoming, what ensues here is at minimum a framework on which to build a more expanded and intelligent assessment of the case and some of its key aspects.

The following examination and conjecture does not pretend to cover every possible point of controversy but only some of the more prominent ones. It assumes some elementary and general knowledge of the case on the part of the reader; which knowledge, and beyond what is already contained in the Mabel Normand Source Book itself, can be found in Sidney Kirkpatrick's *A Cast of Killers* and Bruce Long's *William Desmond Taylor: a dossier*, and *Taylorology* series.<sup>245</sup>

#### Who Was William Desmond Taylor?

Despite numerous post-murder suspicions and rumors, sometimes of a sinister nature and none of which has been proven true, Taylor could reasonably be characterized as a *fundamentally* and *at last* a good and high minded man, at least in the worldly sense; and such, at any rate, is my own inclination based on my study and understanding of the case to see him as being. Naturally, exactly what his *true* character was is important because it more than likely helps to tell us who his killer was. The initial reaction to his death was one of almost universal disbelief among those who knew him. In interviews, time and again, these associates and work fellows of his expressed bafflement as to who would have wanted to kill him. Practically all not only spoke well, but indeed highly of him, as a conscientious, hard working, artist, intellectual and idealist; the only notable exception to this being Charlotte Shelby in private comments to friends, such as Woolwine; where she effectively cast Taylor as a perfidious rascal, and this ostensibly because he rejected her (or else perhaps Mary Miles Minter) romantically. As well, the portrait we get is of someone concerned both with protecting films from outside censorship, while nevertheless maintaining that film makers need to be conscious about their role in protecting public morals -- particularly those of young people.

There is, on the other hand and very oddly and significantly, a suggestively irreverent to the point of immoral and anti-religious side to Taylor as shown in his 1920 film "Huckleberry Finn." It may be that Taylor *at the time* of "Finn" was indeed foolishly pandering to and seeking to curry favor with sordid interests in Hollywood, or on the fringes of Hollywood, as a measure of political self-interest. Later and so it might be posited, he found this approach all too hypocritical and distasteful, and consequently turned and endeavored to distance himself from such bad elements in the industry. Possibly therefore it was such as these then, or related, whose ire he incurred.

Of note further is that Taylor was someone who tried to be funny, but didn't actually know how to be so; that is if we are to judge by films of his, such as "Finn" and "Johanna Enlists" (1918), the latter with Mary Pickford. The humor in them, time and again, is from bad to awful. And this *perhaps* and additionally suggests a Taylor, at an earlier time, trying to be quite *what he wasn't* in order to please or win favor with others much different in character and temperament from himself.

Else, his purported forging of antiques when living in New York, recently uncovered by author Charles Higham and his subsequent and mysterious leaving of his wife and daughter in to avoid prosecution on this charge, and assuming them true, are about as bad as anything otherwise we know about him with certainty. Yet even these in turn can be reasonably dismissed as isolated errors of his youth, rather than hard proof the depraved character suggested later by yellow journalists and gossip. His being a not infrequent loner and taciturn man, as sometimes described, may have put some people off, and made him more vulnerable. But this, in and of itself, could hardly be considered grounds for incurring someone's hatred. It is possible that his involvement with women may have incurred

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<sup>245</sup> The vast majority of articles presented in this section are taken from this rich and copious resource, currently located at: <http://www.angelfire.com/az/Taylorology/>

the wrath and jealousy of others, but even granting this, it does not necessarily mean that he himself had done anything wrong per se; only that another had possibly believed he had done so.

Probably one of the more accurate written portraits of Taylor is the following that appeared immediately after his death:

\* from *Los Angeles Record*, February 2, 1922

*Taylor, the man, was for business first. There was no mistaking that part of his nature.*

*His tiny mahogany desk, which was placed against the front of the house, was littered with letters, canceled checks and bills.*

*That he lived to himself was noted by the many personal things that surrounded him. He was a man of modest taste. Even though he was rich and his house luxuriously furnished, there was no sign of extravagance, gaudiness or show about his abode.*

*A copy of Floyd Dells' "Moon Calf," with a hand-painted ribbon marking his progress in the popular story, was on a stand by the piano.*

*The dining-room was orderly, save where the police had been forced to move the blood-stained rugs through from the living room.*

*Strange were the stories told about Taylor today--while his lifeless body was being moved to the Ivy Overholtzer undertaking parlor.*

*He was tall, handsome, charming to meet--that is, if one was fortunate enough to meet him.*

*But he was mysterious of habits.*

*He was quiet, unobtrusive and never entertained women in his bachelor apartments alone.*

*Four years he had lived in the severe, cold-looking colonial apartment court. Four years he had been there, but in that time he was unknown to others who lived there.*

*He seldom entertained. And when he did--his visitors left at a reasonable hour. They were always quiet, just like himself.*

*And when he had work to do, Taylor would not answer the doorbell, the telephone, but would stay locked in his apartment, until everything was finished.*

*It was just his manner.*

*Likewise--he did not believe in "wild parties" at his home.*

*In the four years he had lived at the place he had entertained upon three memorable occasions, and there were crowds, chaperons, and the parties broke up early.*

*And they tell how very inconspicuously he dressed. Always he was well groomed--that is what those who were fortunate enough to get a glimpse of the man say--but never what was called "a fashion plate."*

*He hadn't been home of evenings lately much--because the light in his living room had been out. That was the way neighbors knew that the popular director was about.*

*Taylor was silent about his business affairs. He discussed them with nobody. He kept his own counsel, just as he preferred to live alone.*

*His heart affairs were also seldom discussed. But that Miss Minter was very popular with the dead man was discerned by the fact that her telephone number led the list in the directory in his telephone booth.*

*Likewise, other film favorites had their place in his calling list, but his name has not been linked with any of them, although he was known as an eligible bachelor.*

If then Taylor was indeed and essentially a "good" man, then who would have wanted and sought to have him slain? As one way of trying to answer this, let's start with the assumption that the pre-murder burglaries and the murder itself are connected. This, of course, has yet to be established. Indeed, among historians, scholars, and most of the detectives, no one has even yet seriously tried to maintain it. For the sake of argument, however, let's look at the case from this angle and see where it might take us. Since the very first investigations, few or none have asserted that the burglaries and murderer are connected other than to suggest Sands as a suspect. Yet more often than not the Sands as killer theory has been brushed aside as unlikely. Consequently, it is concluded that the burglaries and murder are somehow just a coincidence.

### **The Burglaries**

Upon returning from trip to Europe, in July 1921, Taylor found his valet and houseman Edward F. Sands had stolen, money, clothes, and wrecked his expensive sports car.<sup>246</sup> The valet disappeared and Taylor had a warrant put out for his arrest. Then on December 4, Taylor's home was broken into. Jewelry was stolen; apparently, by Sands; who then sold the goods in Stockton, and then mailed the pawn tickets back to Taylor, accompanied by a mocking note. By December 17, the incidents had taken on such notoriety that they were made a light-hearted joke of in a newspaper column.<sup>247</sup>

\* from *New York Telegraph*, January 8, 1922

*One of the burglars who robbed William D. Taylor of jewelry worth \$1,700 returned two weeks later and smoked a cigarette on the porch of the motion picture director's home.*

*How did Taylor know about the return visit? The nocturnal visitor left the butt of his cigarette on the step. It was gold-tipped, of the exclusive brand used by the director, the entire stock was stolen with the jewelry.*

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<sup>246</sup> William Desmond Taylor: A Dossier pp. 216-217

<sup>247</sup> *Los Angeles Herald*, Dec. 17, 1921.

*Between 8 p.m. and midnight of December 4, burglars battered down the back door of 404-B South Alvarado street. The police found evidence of a leisurely luncheon in the kitchen -- and footprints on the bed upstairs! The visitors had thoroughly ransacked the house for jewels and cigarettes, but overlooked other valuables.*

After the murder occurred in February, other reports of intruders, and Taylor's efforts to fight them off appeared.

\* from *Los Angeles Record*, February 2, 1922

1. Taylor had a premonition that death was near, and related his fear to Mrs. J. M. Berger, income tax expert. "If anything happens," he told her yesterday afternoon, "look out for my affairs."

2. Mysterious phone calls and anonymous letters were received by Taylor. He told Mrs. Berger that for three weeks someone had been attempting to find out if Taylor was in his apartment. When Taylor answered, the person would hang up immediately.

3. Taylor was engaged in a telephone call that evidently worried him, when Mabel Normand called at his apartments at 7:15 p.m. yesterday.<sup>248</sup>

4. Taylor is reported to have told Charles Maigne, a friend, that he feared unknown persons, who invaded his apartments while he was absent, walked on his bed with dusty shoes, and left gold-tipped cigarette stubs.

5. Charles Maigne says Taylor believed an enemy would do him harm.<sup>249</sup>

\* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 3, 1922

The officers were diligently following the trail of the mysterious man after they learned that several times the strange nocturnal visitor had been driven away by Taylor at the point of a gun.

But two weeks ago, the investigators said Taylor found this man trying to gain entrance to the bungalow by means of a bedroom window. The window was half open and Taylor is said to have driven him away.

Many times the murdered director is said to have heard unusual noises about the house and upon investigation found the unwelcome visitor prowling about the building or premises, but each time Taylor flourished a gun and drove him away.

And then again, the police say in trying to weave a chain of incriminating evidence about the hunted man, Taylor received telephone calls which brought forth no response when he answered. It is believed the calls came from this person who was ascertaining if any one was at home at the bungalow.

\* from *Los Angeles Record*, February 3, 1922

A guest in the Dumas home next to Taylor said he saw two men last Monday night in the court yard. The men, the guest said, went to the door of Taylor's home, tried the door with a key, then walked away. One of these men, the police believe, is probably the murderer.

Taylor's colored valet, Harry [sic] Peavey, who found the body, said that on several occasions Taylor had been annoyed by mysterious persons walking around his house. He said that on one occasion he asked Taylor why he didn't carry his gun.

"Somebody is liable to walk up those stairs when you're in your bedroom," he said he told Taylor, "and hold you up."

"No, he won't," Peavey said Taylor replied. "I keep my gun on the bureau, and if I hear anyone walking up those stairs and he doesn't answer when I call him, he's a goner."

Peavey said Taylor did drive away these nocturnal visitors on several occasions at the point of a gun....

### **Sands, the Burglars, and the Killer**

It is fairly obvious that it wasn't Sands (as such) who Taylor had in mind in thinking he needed to protect himself.<sup>250</sup> Since Sands was clearly implicated in the earlier robberies, was the miscreant valet somehow connected with the group that later assaulted Taylor in his home?

"Dear Mr. Taylor, So sorry to inconvenience you, even temporarily. Also observe the lesson of forced sale of assets. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. (Signed) "Alias Jimmy V."

It seems very unlikely that a boyish "galoot," such as witness Faith MacLean descried him, would take such a contemptuous tone with Taylor if he were not acting with the support of others.<sup>251</sup> The details of an association between Sands and a criminal group of some kind leave much to conjecture. Nonetheless, it stands as very plausible that some point either before or after the first robbery when Taylor was on vacation, Sands was contacted and enlisted by someone with a grudge against Taylor. This person or persons, already had a gang in place, and Sands, in effect, became a new member or accessory of some kind. Subsequently in the next burglaries which he carried out, Sands was participating with the group in some way. Again, the specifics of such a scenario are hard to guess. Yet if, as we hypothesize, the other person or group wanted to kill Taylor, was this also Sands intent? Not at all, for the simple reason that Sands was deliberately *not* informed of the other's darker purposes. Indeed, there was perhaps good reason for this; for in point of fact, what happened was that Sands became a patsy for the real killer; which was possibly the

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<sup>248</sup> Mabel Normand, who said she was standing outside while it was taking place, was suspicious of this call as well. However, it is since generally accepted (though we can't know for sure, of course) that the call was from actor Antonio Moreno, and according to Moreno was of merely a routine business nature.

<sup>249</sup> See also *Los Angeles Express*, Feb. 2, 1922

<sup>250</sup> Nor does it seem conceivable that, as some might aver, he felt the need to be on the look out for Shelby or a hired gunman of hers.

<sup>251</sup> Taylor may have fired his chauffeur Earl Tiffany, in Aug. 1921, because he believed Tiffany was in league with Sands. See *Dossier* p. 218.

killer's intention. Taylor's subsequent murder then came as much as a surprise to Sands as anyone. At the same time, Sands' complete and permanent disappearance, without police ever really finding him, is persuasive evidence that he was in some way connected with the crime, although not necessarily knowing about it (before the fact.)<sup>252</sup>

Following this line of reasoning, we could know who the killer was if we knew who was in this "gang," and who their "boss" was (if they had any as such). For one thing, the burglaries and assaults were motivated by more than mere material gain (though this no doubt was incentive for some). The stomping on Taylor's bed in dirty shoes, their taking time to sit down and eat in his kitchen, their return visits, and mysterious phone calls, show a most decidedly abusive and harassing character.

Clearly, they did not merely want to steal from him; they wanted to purposely and maliciously harm him. This desire to hurt him, in his home no less, *strongly* suggests our killer, and begins to give us some potential clue as to the his (their) motive. Needless to say, the possibilities as to motive are numerous, and this is no easy question to answer concretely. The group may have been one disgruntled person, heading the gang, who ultimately wanted Taylor killed (à la Wilkes Booth), or the group collectively. Some theorists have gone so far as to suggest an all out conspiracy among important studio figures.

The following seem to recommend themselves as among the most plausible reasons Taylor was hated by someone, and of which one or more might be combined in some way with another:

1. Taylor's non-conformism and perhaps perceived betrayal to an amoral or criminal way of thinking.
2. Professional or else Romantic Jealousy (possibly the jealousy of someone whom Taylor did not know that well, or at all.)
3. Taylor had insulted someone ("he was intolerant of mediocrity" stated one contemporary.)
4. Romantic rejection, or else romantic obsession with him.
5. Peculiarly depraved people who, out of psychological derangement, wanted to push an idealist and man of principle to his limits: moral anarchists if you will.

\* from *Los Angeles Express*, February 2, 1922

*Motion picture circles in Los Angeles were shocked when the first news of the murder reached them in an extra edition of the Evening Express.*

*The blow was particularly felt at the Lasky studio; where Taylor was known to every actor, actress, property man and other employees.*

*Immediately on receipt of the news work at the studios and on location ceased and men and women, their pallor showing through the grease paint of their makeups, gathered in knots to discuss the tragedy and speculate on what prompted the crime.*

*Many theories were offered, among them revenge for fancied wrong, desire for gain and jealousy.*

\* from *Los Angeles Express*, February 8, 1922

*Three men have been under suspicion by these officers for the past two days. One of them may be arrested today. It was definitely stated by the sheriff's office that steps would be taken to charge one of them with complicity, at least, in the crime.*

*This assertion dovetails with intimation that Taylor was the victim of a sinister plot in which many persons well known to the public are more or less involved. It is whispered that before the investigation is concluded a startling list of names will be bandied about as co-conspirators in the slaying of the noted director.*

*Shortly after 9 o'clock deputies were dispatched to look for the one of the trio said to have full knowledge of the murder and to collect further evidence relative to the asserted conspiracy...*

*Sand's connection with the case has proved the bone of contention between various officials working on the mystery. The police department, practically to a man, are inclined to believe him guilty of the murder.*

*Representatives of the sheriff's office take a diametrically opposite view. There is nothing in the evidence thus far disclosed which would connect the former secretary with the crime, they say.*

\* from *Long Beach Daily Telegram*, February 8, 1922

*Police seeking the slayer of William Desmond Taylor, movie director, were working on the theory today that his assassin was hired to kill him. It is believed that Edward F. Sands, former valet of the director, may have been the hired assassin. In pursuance of this theory, detectives were checking up on members of the movie colony who were acquainted with Sands...*

*The new theory is that the person who desired to have Taylor slain remembered the old enmity between the director and his former valet and used this, as well as money, to secure his death.*

*Taylor is believed to have had enemies, as well as friends, in the motion picture colony. These enemies were men as well as women, and some of the enmities sprang from the numerous love affairs he is understood to have had.*

*One of these enemies employed Sands to do the killing, according to the police theory...*

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<sup>252</sup> It's worth noting in this respect that Sands was publicly promised by the police that if, unless guilty of the murder itself, he came in for questioning, no charges would or could be filed against him for the earlier robberies; since Taylor, the only one who could accuse him in court, was dead.



\* from *Dallas Times Herald*, February 9, 1922

*"A motion picture director can break as well as make an actor, and I believe William Desmond Taylor was killed by some actor or actress whom he recently refused to place in a production," Elzier La Maie, motion picture director and instructor in motion picture acting, said Wednesday.*

*Mr. La Maie has recently come to Dallas from the Pacific coast, where he directed motion pictures for a number of years.*

*"I knew Mr. Taylor very well," said Mr. La Maie, "and regarded him very highly. He was a splendid director, and was well liked by everybody who knew him. He was regarded as a gentleman always.*

*"Many directors have incurred the enmity and hatred of actors whom they refused to cast in certain productions, or by actors who believed the directors were trying to break them or make them unpopular with the public. It is my belief that some one harboring such a grudge is responsible for Taylor's death."*

Possibly Taylor's killer(s) may have been homosexual, as was perhaps Taylor himself, as some have claimed. One ground for possibly supposing this is that Sands, at different times expressed both strong adoration and contempt of Taylor.

\* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 6, 1922

[Winifred Kingston, a friend of Taylor's]: *"On another occasion Sands did another peculiar thing. Mr. Taylor had two thermos bottles around the house, neither of any particular value.*

*"There were many other things Sands easily could have stolen of more value, but he took one of these bottles to present to some girl. Her mother did not understand the act at all and didn't want the girl to take it.*

*"Most unusual of Sands' actions, however, was a document he once drew up.*

*"One day, to show his affection and regard for Mr. Taylor, he wrote, in his own handwriting, a sort of servile contract, in which he said that he would be Mr. Taylor's servant for life and would always be his slave.*

*"Mr. Taylor told me about the document and laughed. I don't know what every happened to the paper, but Sands apparently took it seriously.*

*"All of this led me to believe that the man was mentally deranged and he is the only man I can think of who might have killed Mr. Taylor."*

Taylor's hiring the effeminate Peavey and fawning Sands may suggest Taylor was homosexual,<sup>253</sup> but aside from this we have no definite evidence. From what we actually know about Taylor, the two may have been taken on out of fatherly benevolence as much -- indeed more so -- than any other reasons. This would be very much in keeping with Taylor's desire, expressed both in his work and privately (as some reported), to be an upholder of ideals and a mentor to youth. In all, I take the interpretation of Taylor himself being homosexual to be a claim without much beyond rumor and gossip to sustain it.<sup>254</sup>

### The Night of the Murder

The conventionally accepted story of the night of Taylor's death is: Between 7:00-7:45 pm on Feb. 1, Mabel Normand was having a friendly visit with Taylor in his bungalow. Books were the primary topic, and nothing of particular significance took place (although Peavey later claimed the two had argued.) When it was over Taylor escorted Mabel to her car, during which time someone snuck into the bungalow. The killer concealed inside, Taylor returned to his home and was shot by him shortly afterward. The gunman then made a clean escape. While there were people who passed the scene, including Howard Fellows who actually knocked on Taylor's door, during the night no one other than the killer knew that Taylor had been killed. Next morning, Henry Peavey, Taylor's houseman, came to work and found Taylor's body, shortly after 7:30 am.

For our purposes here, let's see if a different scenario might not fit better what actually happened, followed by accounts and testimony to gird and reinforce such an interpretation.

Mabel visits Taylor between 7:00-7:45 pm, Feb 1. Taylor walks her to her car, and having said farewell, goes inside. The killer, however, is *not inside*. Taylor sits down to go through his canceled checks and account books, having casually left open his door as was often his habit, even in winter. Despite the previous assaults on his home, he may have thought it unmanly to need to be too cautious. As well the good mood he was reported to be in that evening may have caused him to let down his guard. Sometime then just before or about 9:00 pm, the killer, a member of our "gang," is stalking outside Taylor's house. In his moving about, and possibly pausing to prepare himself, he sees the door open, stealthily sneaks up; then rushes inside. Before Taylor can be aware of what has just happened, the gunman has Taylor stick his hands up, possibly getting him to turn around first. Something perhaps is said by one and or the other. The killer then, with the gun pointing right into Taylor's back, pulls the trigger -- either with a vengeance or else, perhaps as someone employed to carry out the deed, in a casual and matter of fact manner.<sup>255</sup>

As the assassin goes to leave, he is spotted by neighbor Faith MacLean. However, his nonchalance prevents her from being suspicious.

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<sup>253</sup> See *N.Y. Herald*, Feb. 6, 1922, T62.

<sup>254</sup> Someone objected after reading this conclusion that the dubious sort of evidence I speak of is as much as one could possess regarding such a claim, short of an open avowal by Taylor or else his being criminally convicted of sodomy. Notwithstanding there may be some truth to this argument, I personally remain unpersuaded by the suspicion or surmise.

<sup>255</sup> L.A. detective William Cahill believed Taylor's killer embraced him before hand, and in this posture shot him. Moreover and partly due to this conjectured embrace, Cahill thought the culprit to have been Charlotte Shelby acting out of amorous jealousy. Yet another interpretation, given the angle of the bullet, is that Taylor's assailant was lying on the floor when he (or she) shot the director.

At some point from around 9:30 pm or perhaps within a few hours after the deed, someone discovers that Taylor is dead. Who found him? This may have been Taylor's chauffeur, Howard Fellows (although it may be that Fellows was not even at the bungalow at all that night as he later claimed.) Returning with Taylor's car sometime around 9:30 pm or later, he knocks on Taylor's door. At the same time as he gets no response to his repeated knocks, he notices that the light is on in Taylor's bungalow. Curious he peers through a crack in the window blind, and to his shock sees Taylor lying in blood murdered. There is no mistaking it is murder, and he contacts his brother and Paramount studio employee, Harry Fellows.

\* from *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 10, 1922

*Los Angeles--...Dumas said that on the night of the murder he had noticed that Taylor's study window shade was up several inches so anyone could have looked into the room and have seen him lying dead on the floor.*

Another scenario would have the word spread first by the killers themselves, via, the gang. A note, with perhaps a joking tone to it, is sent by a dupe messenger.

In any case, word gets to Paramount manager Charles Eyton (possibly through Harry Fellows), who then disturbs Jesse Lasky's evening with the disastrous news. Police are not formally informed until Lasky can figure out what needs to be done to make sure studio interests are protected. What exactly followed after this point can only be left to speculation. It may be that Taylor's home was re-entered during the night by the studio people, which might account for why Taylor's body lay so neatly on the floor, as well as some of the other evidence later alleged to be found on the scene, such as the three blonde hairs found on his coat lapel.<sup>256</sup> This would also possibly explain why Taylor's window curtain was partially up.

\* from *Los Angeles Times*, February 10, 1922

*Mr. Dumas, director in the Cal-Mex Oil Company, was among those who responded to the alarm after the murder. He also saw the blind in the front room of the Taylor apartment raised about four inches when he came home on the night of the slaying about 11 o'clock. The light was on at that time, but the fact that the curtain was raised was unusual, he said.*

Regardless of whether or not the crime site was actually and subsequently entered during the night, the studio people agree to wait till morning to go through the bungalow, rather than risk creating too much of a disturbance, and unnecessarily implicate themselves. Using his enormous clout as head of Paramount, Lasky<sup>257</sup> goes directly to police heads, and after telling them what happened, says he needs their help to protect studio. It is not difficult for him to convince them he is not the killer, for the simple case that he isn't, and can make his case as such. His purpose is to keep the scandal contained as best it may be, and the police fully understand.

They decide then that Peavey should "discover" the body in the morning; so as to avoid having to later explain how the body was actually found (and perhaps even handled), or why there was a delay in officially bringing the police onto scene. Peavey is roused in his bed. After being informed what has happened, they tell him that he is going to be the one who finds the body, and the police, then studio people, will then await their cue to come on the scene. Some among the studio people may have had then correct suspicions as to the killer's identity or perhaps even knew who the killer was. Yet far from viewing themselves as conspirators, the studio employees and police, in looking out for the studio's interests, saw themselves as the city's first line of defense in acting as they did.

## The Charade

Next morning, Peavey does his ordinary run for Taylor's milk of magnesia (to make things look routine as possible), and "finds" the body even though he knows well in advance what he will find. Even so, it is no less distressing. In his earliest accounts of seeing Taylor's body on the morning of February 2, Peavey states that he found his dead employer lying in a pool of blood. Interestingly enough, this devastating detail given in his first interviews is

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<sup>256</sup> The latter would seem to imply Mary Miles Minter would be such a person; however, it seems unlikely she would have been involved in this "secret" search. The explanations for the blonde hairs and silk nightgown, as explained by Bruce Long, can be explained on the basis of:

The 1926 press reports (after Keyes' briefcase was stolen) only said that blonde hairs were found by King on Taylor's body. King's 1930 article discusses finding the hairs on p. 288 of my book, but it's unclear which date he is referring to. However, since King was not assigned to the case until Feb. 3, then the hairs were not found before that date. Possibilities:

a. On Feb. 3, Minter visited Taylor's body at the undertaker's, which is where the hairs were later found on Taylor's clothing. Could Minter have touched and hugged Taylor's clothing, when she was there? If so, that is a possible explanation for the hairs being there.

b. In King's article, he admits fabricating a previous public statement (regarding a psychic's phone call) in order to hopefully draw an incriminating statement from Shelby/Minter. Although blonde hairs were certainly found on Taylor's body, perhaps the identification of the hairs as belonging to Minter was similarly fabricated. Indeed, if the hairs truly had been identified as belonging to Minter, then it is very strange that Sanderson doesn't mention it in his 1941 letter, which leads me to feel that the hairs may not truly have been identified as Minter's.

In 1922, the police made no statement regarding the nightgown. Reporter Frank Bartholomew was the one who said he saw it, with initials, and he broke the story. Cline later stated that the nightgown had no initials. Peavey said the nightgown had been there long before the day of the murder. I think the nightgown probably had no initials. Taylor certainly had several of Minter's handkerchiefs, and it's logical that those handkerchiefs would have been in the same part of dresser as the nightgown. Perhaps Bartholomew just had a quick glance inside that drawer, saw the initialed handkerchiefs on top of the nightgown, and mentally transposed the initials onto the nightgown.

<sup>257</sup> It is not necessary that the person must have been Lasky himself who contacted the police. Someone from (most likely) Paramount studio, who had much clout in the city, would conceivably have temporarily served in this role just as well.

omitted entirely in all his later versions of what took place. Although prepared in advance, he is emotionally still very affected.

\* from *Los Angeles Record*, February 2, 1922

*"'Good night, Henry, good night,' he said to me when I left him yesterday," said Henry Peavey, Taylor's colored valet, between sobs as he told of the tragedy that ended the life of his beloved employer last night.*

*"'Good night, Mr. Taylor," I said to him, and that's the last I saw of him until I opened the door this morning and found his dead body, his feet stretching toward me on the floor."*

*The negro broke into soft sobs and then declared passionately: "I wish I could get the man that did it. I'd go to jail for the rest of my life if I could get him."*

*As Peavey talked, he was taking some white cloths clotted with blood from a wire paper basket and placing them in the court incinerator.*

*"His blood," the negro said, pathetically. "We just used the cloths to clean up the room."*

*"Mr. Taylor was the most wonderful man I ever worked for and I don't see how anybody would want to kill him. I have been with him six months."*

*Peavey said that he came to Taylor's apartment early today, intending to go through the usual round of his duties.*

*"I was going to fix his bath water for him," said the valet, "and then give him his dose of medicine. After that I was going to fix his breakfast a couple of boiled eggs, some toast and a glass of orange juice.*

*"When I opened the door I saw him lying there stretched out on the floor, his feet toward me and the floor all bloody.*

*"I turned and screamed and the landlord came rushing in."*

*Peavey said he lived at 127 1/2 Third Street.*

*"I have not been staying with Taylor during the night, but have been sleeping in my room."*

*Peavey's theory was that somebody slipped into the open door of Taylor's apartment when Taylor took Mabel Normand to her car late last night, and shot him from ambush inside the room.*

\* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 3, 1922

*"I've worked for a lot of men," he went on, "but Mr. Taylor was the most wonderful of all of them. I came here this morning intending to fix his bath and get his breakfast, which I always does. And before the bath I'd bring him a dose of medicine. It was always just the same -- for breakfast two soft-boiled eggs, toast and a glass of orange juice.*

*"And having it in my mind to make everything just as nice as I could, knowing he would be pleased and say a kind word, I opened the door.*

*"And then I found him stretched out on the floor, which was all bloody and his feet toward the door.*

*"And then I backed to the door, pretty near overcome with horror, and yelled for the landlord. The way I figure it is that somebody slipped in last night when Mr. Taylor took Miss Normand to the car and shot him from hiding. But how could any one kill such a man as he was?"*

Three days later, at the Coroners Inquest, Peavey came across to reporters this way:

\* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 5, 1922

[Coroner Nance:] *"What did you see?"*

*"I saw his feet, and I said 'Mr. Taylor'—just like that. Then I saw his face, and I turned and run out and yelled. And then I yelled some more—"*

*And then Henry broke into high pitched laughter as he recalled his fright and terror. Laughed as he thought of himself going in and speaking to a dead man. It was a huge joke--no doubt about it. And the joke was on him.*

*Of course, He laughed and those in the room laughed with him...*

\* from *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, February 5, 1922

*"Who was the first person that you told Mr. Taylor was dead?"*

*It was then that the negro began laughing in a hysterical manner. He doubled forward in the chair. His shrieks of laughter caused a real sensation. A number of women spectators appeared frightened by the actions of the witness who was finally quieted. He was then asked...*

The story subsequently related of a mysterious doctor (who strangely never later turned up) coming on the scene, and pronouncing Taylor as having died from a hemorrhage is a complete phony, inasmuch as the doctor was a phony. The purpose of this charade was to allow studio people to rummage the place, before the coroner arrived, without suggesting they were tampering with the crime scene. Again, the police have no reason to think the studio has any purpose other than to look after its important interest, by recovering anything which might, if found as evidence, be thought of as injuring Paramount studio's reputation. There is no suggestion that killer is being covered up for; they all are sincere in expressing their wish to see him apprehended. Only what was done *was done*, and now what mattered most was that the bad publicity be smothered and contained as best it might be.

### The Time Element Problem

It has generally been assumed that Taylor's murder took place within the last quarter hour prior to 8 o'clock, but could this be wrong? The final conclusion that the murder took place within this time frame rests entirely on chauffeur Howard Fellows' testimony. On the other hand almost every known newspaper account of the first day after the shooting gives 9 o'clock or closely thereabouts as the time of the shooting.

The following are some articles that support the 9 o'clock version as being the correct one. True, it is not uncommon to find errors in the newspaper first editions; nevertheless, where they are consistent does support a case for their accuracy.

\* from **New York Tribune**, February 10, 1922

*Los Angeles, Feb. 9.--Evidence supporting the theory that William D. Taylor, murdered film director, was the victim of a hired assassin came to light today with the opening of a wide-spread investigation of the mystery by District Attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine.*

*The "fighting prosecutor," as he is called, personally questioned witness after witness, to lay a foundation for the grilling of at least two film stars, who will be called before him tomorrow...*

*Patrolman Albert Long, whose statement does not seem to have played a part in the investigation carried on by the detective bureau, was the witness who added new facts concerning the activities about the Taylor bungalow on the night of the shooting.*

*The policeman said that shortly after 8 o'clock in the evening he had seen a man loitering in the street which skirts the side of the court in which the director's bungalow is located. He said the man wore a cap, an overcoat and a "mussy suit," which he was unable to describe in greater detail.*

*The description fits that of the man who, according to Mrs. Douglas MacLean, a neighbor of Taylor, was seen loitering about the front of the house two or more minutes after the firing of the shot that took the life of the director.*

*If the man seen by the policeman is the murderer it would indicate that the assassin was a cool-headed, professional gunman, who for some as yet unexplained reason remained within a stone's throw of the scene of the killing, trusting to luck to escape should the crime be prematurely exposed...*

If murder happened at 9:00 this would have probably been the killer *before* the event, not after; which only makes more sense.

The very credible testimony of George Arto, brother in law of King Vidor, also helps to bolster the case against the 8:00 pm shooting. The "third man" mentioned in these pieces with Peavey and Davis, may have been a studio person who simply wished to be kept out for publicity reasons, and had connections or clout enough himself to effect this.

\* from **Los Angeles Examiner**, February 22, 1922

*An amplified statement secured yesterday by The Examiner from George F. Arto, motion picture writer, gives new facts which tend to change the whole theory of the crime as to its time element.*

*Arto, it will be recalled, passed front of the Taylor house on the night of the murder and, as he states, saw Peavey standing on the sidewalk talking to a man of swarthy complexion -- a rough looking character.*

*This was at approximately 7 o'clock.*

*His memory refreshed by circumstances to which his attention had been called since giving his first statement, he remembered yesterday that he returned to the bungalow court at 7:45 o'clock.*

*He is positive of this, he said, as he phoned a young woman who lives near the Taylor bungalow, on whom he was calling. He told her in this conversation that he would be over in five minutes and, looking at his watch, he found the time to be 7:40.*

*He immediately started to walk from his home at 220 South Bonnie Brae street. He reached a point in front of Taylor's house within five minutes.*

*"At that time," he said, "I saw no one around. Miss Normand's car had gone, and Peavey was not in sight."*

*He went to the house of the young woman, and sat in the front room next to the window until about ten minutes after eight.*

*"During that time," he declared, "I heard no shot and am positive that I would have heard a shot been fired."*

*Arto is familiar with firearms, having tested guns for the Savage Arms Company and would be able, he asserts, to distinguish a pistol shot from the backfire of automobiles.*

*As close to the scene of the crime as was either Mrs. MacLean or her maid, Christian Jewett, and in a better position to hear and observe, Arto nevertheless was not attracted by any unusual noises.*

*Hence, it is now believed possible that the murder may have been committed either before or after the time fixed by Mrs. MacLean. And District Attorney Woolwine yesterday admitted the likelihood that the man seen by Mrs. MacLean leaving Taylor's front door was Howard Fellows, the film director's chauffeur.*

Another curious and interesting story is this:

\* from **Los Angeles Examiner**, February 4, 1922

*An excellent example of habitual observation was brought to light yesterday when Mrs. Ida Garrow, a modiste living at the Rose of Sharon Apartments, told Examiner investigators that on Wednesday night as she was walking down Ocean View avenue, at the intersection of Alvarado street, she noticed a man acting in a very peculiar manner.*

*"It was about eight thirty, or possibly twenty minutes of nine," said Mrs. Garrow yesterday, "Wednesday evening I was hurrying to my club which meets at the corner of Grand View and Ocean View avenue. I was late for a class that was studying Hebrew which I did not want to miss, but as I have trained my observational faculties in the study of astrology. It is without voluntary effort that I perceive whatever comes within the range of vision.*

*"As I came to Alvarado street, I saw a tall, slender, smooth shaven policeman, whose face I would instinctively recognize if I were to see him again, walking toward Ocean View avenue. Walking with him was another man, to whom I did not pay particular attention, because my curiosity was aroused by the peculiar actions of a man*

who was coming toward me a few feet in front of the policeman. Although the policeman was not paying the slightest attention to this man, the man was glancing back apprehensively over his shoulder, and at times looking in away from the street which would be directly in toward the court where the body of Mr. Taylor was found.

"As the policeman got closer to this man, the man crossed the street, and I noticed as he crossed that he was short and stout and wore a long overcoat, but there was the shadow of a building falling at such an angle that I could not determine whether he wore a cap or a hat."

Who was the policeman walking down Alvarado street at 8:30 or 8:45, and what did he see? This slight clue given by a careful observer may lead to very important developments in the mysterious murder whose points are now baffling the keenest detectives of the city.

With respect to other witnesses, the following come from some of the main newspaper accounts of that first day.

\* from **Long Beach Daily Telegram**, February 2, 1922

Shot down while writing at a desk by a mysterious assassin, William Desmond Taylor, well known motion picture producer and director, was found dead today in his bungalow in the Westlake District. Death was caused by a bullet wound in the back, just below the left shoulder, according to police.

Taylor, who was 50 years old and wealthy, apparently was killed between 9 and 10 o'clock last night. The body was found today by a colored servant when he reported for duty at the house.

Police detectives who first reached the scene reported that death was from natural causes and it was not until nearly an hour later when an undertaker was removing the body that the bullet wound was found.

Additional officers immediately were dispatched to the house and a comprehensive investigation was begun. The bullet wound caused an internal hemorrhage and Taylor accidentally died a few minutes after being attacked.

Detectives questioned neighbors, who stated they heard what apparently was the report of the revolver shortly after 9 p.m. but at that time believed it was caused by an automobile.

The police immediately began search for Edward F. Sands, former secretary of Taylor. Robbery was not the motive for the murder it was announced, as officers found \$73 in the pocket of the slain man, as well as a large amount of jewelry in the house.

Taylor's revolver was found in a drawer of the dresser in his bedroom on the second floor of the pretentious house. It had not been discharged and none of his personal effects had been disturbed.

The officers reported they are confident that revenge was the motive of the mysterious slayer.

The police records state that when Taylor went to England a year ago on a business and pleasure trip he left Sands, then his secretary, in charge of his personal affairs and when he returned he reported to Detective Sergeants Herman Cline and E. R. Cato that Sands had robbed him of money, jewelry, clothing and a valuable automobile.

A felony warrant was issued for Sands and the police say he never was found.

A second robbery at the Taylor residence was attributed to Sands by the police.

Among the witnesses questioned by the police during the morning were Mabel Normand, Edna Purviance and Douglas MacLean, prominent film stars.

Miss Normand admitted having visited Taylor's bungalow in the early evening yesterday to discuss a new production and that he had escorted her to her automobile at the curb shortly before 9 p.m. Taylor was to telephone to her later in the evening. Miss Normand said he did not do so.

Miss Purviance, who lives in a house adjoining Taylor's bungalow, returned home about midnight and saw a light burning in Taylor's study.

MacLean and his wife, who live in the same district, stated they heard the shot fired after 9 o'clock. They thought at the time it might be an automobile exhaust. They described a strange man whom they saw in the street.

Miss Normand told detectives that while she was talking with Taylor early last evening concerning a new picture production the robberies of the Taylor home were mentioned.

"He told me he feared Sands and that he had a premonition of something wrong," Miss Normand was quoted as telling officers.

\* from **Los Angeles Evening Express**, February 2, 1922

The slayer evidently committed the crime about near 9 o'clock last night. It was at that time that Douglas MacLean, motion picture actor, and his wife, who lived next door, say they heard the sound of the pistol shot.

Police also believe that the slaying occurred at that time because of the opinion expressed by the deputy coroner that the man had been dead for more than ten hours when the body was found.

The last person who saw Taylor alive, with the exception of the assassin, was Miss Mabel Normand, film star. She visited him at his home last night. She arrived at the home shortly before 7 o'clock, she said. Her statement to Detectives Winn and Murphy follows:

...Douglas MacLean and his wife were having their supper in their home that also adjoins Taylor's house, but to the east, when they heard the sound of a shot. They place the time at about 9:30 or 9 o'clock in the statement they made to Detective Sergeants Wallis and Ziegler....

Mrs. MacLean, however, told the officers that she noticed a man walking rapidly down the walk towards Taylor's home last evening shortly after Miss Normand left. She gave the following description of the man to officers: Height about 5 feet 8 or 9 inches, weight about 165 pounds. He had a muffler about his neck and was at the time wearing a plaid cap pulled over his eyes. She did not notice the clothing he was wearing and was unable to furnish the police with a better description because she says, she was unable to see distinctly at that hour of the night.

"I had, of course, no reason to be suspicious of that man at that time," said Mrs. MacLean, when discussing the case with the two detective sergeants. "But now I am convinced that he was the slayer. It was after I had seen him that my husband and I sat down to dinner. That was about 8:30 or 9 o'clock, I guess.

*"We had just started our dinner when we heard a pistol shot. We did not investigate because we heard nothing further after that to arouse our suspicions and we thought that possibly the sound we heard then was that of an automobile backfiring in the street. Now, of course, we know that it was the shot that ended the life of Mr. Taylor."*

See also *Los Angeles Record*, Feb. 2, 1922, *Boston Herald* Feb 3, 1922, and *Long Beach Daily Telegram*, February 2, 1922.

Despite these numerous initial reports and interviews, at the Coroner's Inquest *three days later*, the accounts of the key witnesses from the bungalow have the time of the shot occurring as 8:00 pm. What caused this change? The following item very likely suggests the woman being spoken of is Faith MacLean, the husband, Donald MacLean. Both worked for Paramount.

\* from *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 9, 1922

*One woman prominently identified with the investigation is said to be in possession of information which she has thus far failed to turn in. She has adopted an attitude of uncertainty in the whole matter, it is asserted. Detectives from the central police station were assigned orders to visit the woman and insist upon the facts in the case. Police informants declare she has been instructed by her husband to "develop" a sudden loss of memory.*

Was there a special reason why, aside from those in the MacLean home, others living in the bungalow court were so reticent about or oblivious to the shot?

\* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 4, 1922

*Other bungalow dwellers say they heard nothing Mrs. Myrtle B. Pratt, who lives at the entrance to the court, says she saw no suspicious character either entering or leaving the place and that she had heard no unusual sound of any description.*

*Mrs. J. K. Lawrence, who also lives at the Alvarado street entrance, said:*

*"There are so many automobiles passing here all of the time and their back-fire explosions are so similar to a pistol shot that we have gotten so we pay no attention to them whatever. I have no recollection of hearing anything that sounded like a shot at any particular time during the evening in which the shooting occurred, but I might have heard a dozen such sounds without feeling the slightest alarm. I think every occupant of the court should try to recollect anything he or she saw which might in any way throw light on the event."*

*Mrs. Charles Cooley, living two doors from the Taylor residence, said that she and her husband were sitting in their living room reading almost the entire evening and did not hear a sound. They had their blinds drawn and had no occasion to look out, so saw no one.*

*Mrs. Arthur W. Watcher, stated that she and her husband were out for the evening and returned late, but that they did not notice lights burning anywhere. Both she and Mrs. Cooley voiced the idea that people were entirely too unobservant of things going on around them, and Mrs. Cooley said:*

*"When I think that such a kind, fine man as Mr. Taylor is said to have been, was right here helpless, at the mercy of a fiendish murderer when some of us might have gone to his aid and saved him, and we only known what was going on. It seems that we all live too much to ourselves and that there ought to be some better mode of communication between us all."*

\* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 12, 1922

*...Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Lawrence of 400-A South Alvarado also told an interesting story.*

*The family was downstairs on the evening of the murder until about 8:30 o'clock, when Mrs. Lawrence went to the bedroom upstairs.*

*"My husband said he heard a short conversation -- portions of it -- a woman's laugh, a man say good-by, and then a car driving away,"<sup>258</sup> Mrs. Lawrence said. Their apartment is the nearest in the court to Alvarado street.*

*"That is all we know."*

### **The Credibility of Howard Fellows**

It has been taken for granted by most scholars that the late arriving testimony of crucial witness Howard Fellows, brother of Lasky employee Harry Fellows, is not to be doubted. Fellows' testimony is critical because it supposedly places almost exactly when the murder was to have transpired. Is it possible, notwithstanding, that Fellows, as part of a cover-up, was lying? His brother Harry, incidentally, was among those who, along with Charles Eyton, searched Taylor's bungalow the morning of February 2.<sup>259</sup>

\* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 8, 1922

*Declaring that he called William D. Taylor at 7:55 o'clock Wednesday night and receiving no answer, went to the apartment of the film director. arriving there at 8:15 o'clock, rang the doorbell and still met with no response, Howard Fellows, chauffeur for the murdered director, last night definitely fixed the time within which the crime must have been committed and added facts regarded as of first magnitude importance in their bearing upon the crime.*

*Strangely enough, this young man, who had been Taylor's driver for nearly six months, had not been questioned at length until yesterday, when an Examiner representative called on him at his home, 1622 Shatto place.*

*He is brother of Harry Fellows, who was Taylor's assistant director.*

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<sup>258</sup> It's interesting that Mabel and Taylor are identified by inference and not specific recognition. Might it possibly have been two other persons that Lawrence heard?

<sup>259</sup> See the 1941 police report of Detective Lieutenant Sanderson; found in *William Desmond Taylor: A Dossier*.

Yesterday Detective Sergeant Tom Zeigler took Howard to the Taylor home, 404-B South Alvarado street. He was partially identified by a resident of the neighborhood as the person he had seen seated in a car on the night of the murder near the scene of the crime and about the time it was committed.

Fellows denied this and convinced Zeigler that the man was mistaken.

One of Fellows' most interesting statements, other than that relating to his movements and observations on the night of the assassination, had to do with an alleged quarrel between Taylor and Mabel Normand.

"I was driving Mr. Taylor and Miss Normand from the Ambassador Hotel, where they had attended a New Year's Eve party, to her home," said Fellows.

"On the way they had a quarrel. I don't know what it was about, but both were very much excited.

"Mr. Taylor took Miss Normand home and then returned to his apartment. Upon arriving there he broke down and wept.

"On the following morning he did up some jewelry in a package and took it to Miss Normand at her home."

Henry Peavey, Taylor's colored valet, confirms this.

"Mr. Taylor and Miss Normand were very affectionate," continued Fellows. Questioned independently, Peavey said Taylor often caressed her.

As to these matters Fellows spoke casually, but when he entered upon the events of the night of February 1, his narrative became astounding both as to its content, and because he never told it before.

"I left the house (Mr. Taylor's) about 4:30 Wednesday afternoon," Fellows began.

"Mr. Taylor told me he might be going out in the evening and instructed me to be sure to telephone by 7:30. I went to the home of a young lady friend and was there until 7:55. I recall the time accurately because I had it on my mind to call Mr. Taylor and ask him if he would need the car.

"I called him two or three times before that hour, but received no reply. I left the house of my girl friend at five minutes to eight and drove directly to Mr. Taylor's.

"I reached there about quarter past eight.

"There was a light in the living room. I was surprised that Mr. Taylor should be home and not have answered the telephone.

"I rang the doorbell. Silence. I rang again. Still, no response. I must have rung three or four times. Then I concluded: 'Well, he has some one there and doesn't want to answer.

"So I put up the car, I was around back of the house, and it is peculiar that persons in the neighborhood should have heard me walking and not have heard me put up the car. I made a good deal of noise doing this, as the garage is difficult to get into, and I guess I must have backed the car up four or five times.

"I am satisfied that I am the man Mrs. Douglas MacLean saw standing on the porch and leaving the house, I wore a cap and a raincoat.

"I noticed no cars in the immediate vicinity and saw no one who aroused my suspicions.

"Naturally, I am convinced that both when I phoned and when I rang the doorbell, Mr. Taylor was lying there on the floor murdered."

Taking the testimony of Fellows and Miss Normand together, it is now possible to fix the time of the murder within fifteen minutes.

Miss Normand said she left Taylor between 7:30 and 7:45 o'clock.

Fellows called at 7:55.

The murder was committed between Miss Normand's leave taking and Fellows' phoning.

Hence, for the first time, the police have a picture of the murder as it relates to the time when and in which it was committed.

Before Fellows' statement became available there was no conclusive evidence as to the time the bullet of the assassin struck the film director down. testimony as to the shot being heard was so vague as to be unconvincing. It could not be said with finality that the murder did not occur at midnight or at any hour of the night.

The acts of the drama leading to the murder must have been brief. It would appear, indeed, that there were no preliminaries, that the intruder, concealed in the room, stepped out and fired the shot.

It is therefore deduced that it was a premeditated crime and not one precipitated by a quarrel or any sort of scene more than of momentary duration.

One group of police investigators and most of the deputy sheriffs working on the case are now convinced that the visit of Mabel Normand was the immediate antecedent occasion for the crime.

This theory naturally takes for granted that Miss Normand had not the slightest intimation that her dear friend was to be shot to death, but officers cannot help but believe that the murderer found the way for his crime paved in some way by the visit of Miss Normand.

\* from *San Francisco Examiner*, February 10, 1922

" Walter Vogdes

In contrast was Howard Fellows, Taylor's chauffeur, who followed Peavey. Fellows, a lad with a weak, somewhat furtive face, sat on a bench in Woolwine's outer office and with twitching fingers lit one cigarette after another, each one on the preceding one.

When his turn came to enter the inner office he literally ran inside, the way a timorous man runs into an ice cold plunge. When he came out his expression was frightened as he pulled his cap over his eyes and streaked it down the hallway...

Why did Fellows insist it was he whom Faith MacLean saw? How could he be so sure? Is it possible no one heard Fellow's starting his car because he wasn't there in the first place? Last, it should be noted, Fellows disappeared from public view just after being questioned for hardly more than a day.

\* from *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 6, 1922

[Mabel:] *"There is a doubt yet in my mind but that the murderer was not in the house secreted during the time of my short visit with Mr. Taylor," she said. "I can't understand how he could have been brazen enough to have entered during the brief interim when Mr. Taylor came with me to the curbing."*

And added to this, how the much more astonishing that Howard Fellows should be knocking at Taylor door in only 15 minutes later, with the killer having committed the deed nicely in between.

### Judgment from on High

If there was a deliberate effort on the part of some major studio heads, and cooperated in by some of the police, including D.A. Woolwine, to transfer the reported time of the shooting from 9:00 pm to 8:00 pm, what could have been it's purpose? This, of course, can only be guessed at present. It might be argued the time change was done to mislead the real killer, as to what they knew. However, there is another possibility; namely, smear Mabel Normand by tying her more closely in with the crime, yet without formally implicating her of any guilt.

Why would they want to make things more difficult for Mabel?

1. Some important people were very angry with Mabel. Perhaps emotionally, they blamed her for what happened. And perhaps, though through no fault of her own, they were right, inasmuch as someone may have targeted Taylor out of jealousy over Mabel.
2. As of the Arbuckle scandal, Hollywood was already in the process of cleaning house. In the occurrence of the Taylor case, here was a perfect opportunity to rid themselves of suspected drug user Normand.
3. Mabel was known for a devastating wit that might have got her into trouble with someone. This was then, their bitter "joke" her.

To make this distortion of the facts all the more easily to accomplish -- even if this interfering with justice were somehow brought to light, the damage would still have been done, and there would be little sympathy for Mabel, and probably more for the seemingly would-be do-gooders who, it could be said, were only looking out for the Hollywood community's standing and reputation.

"...Mabel was the Patsy who got the blame for what other people did. She suffered humiliation and disgrace in silence when she could have set herself right -- by 'telling on' some one else..."<sup>260</sup>

Moreover and it can be reasonably argued, Hollywood and Los Angeles as they grew up in the late teens and early 20s gradually came to be infiltrated, taken over, and fed off of to a significant degree by organized crime. Organized crime is by nature dictatorial; much like how a military order is or tends to be. One reason why Pickford, Chaplin, Griffith, Fairbanks, etc., founded United Artists, was so that *artists* would be in charge of making films, not "dictators." From this perspective, Mabel and stars like her was a free spirit who could vie with the most powerful in influence both with the public and within the movie industry itself. A star of such magnitude was or was potentially on the same level, as producers in terms of cultural and popular standing. In this way, Mabel (and stars like her) was one of several possible rivals for spiritual and moral authority in the business. Such as she were a boldly humane, compassionate, and courageous sort that unless they were somehow ousted or demoted could be a voice on behalf of those who were not ready to take the dictatorial trend lying down; all the more so given this egalitarian nature -- something utterly anathema and at odds with the policy of bosses. Nor was Mabel the only one of this kind; such that one could name several other big names of early Hollywood; who by the advent of the talkies were slated to be got rid of. Indeed, hardly even one or two of the silent greats made it out alive (whether literally or figuratively) after the 20s. And even those that did were either downgraded in active status or alienated from the general run of things. All this in effect, I maintain, amounted to a sort of political purge and take over by dictatorial types, tied in on some level with organized crime; whose fundamental *moral* outlook was diametrically opposite to the caring, heart filled, free spirit types who made up the star elite of earlier Hollywood.

### The Investigation

\* from *Los Angeles Evening Express*, January 3, 1922

*"The job is not worth it."*

*Such was the statement made by Charles A. Jones, chief of police, today after he announced he will appear later in the day before the mayor and pension board and ask to retire.*

*This announcement follows the circulation of many rumors for last three months that the chief intended to retire. Political wrangling both inside the police department and at the City hall followed his appointment by Mayor Cryer after the latter's election. Rumors about the central station are that either Capt. R. Lee Heath or Police Commissioner De Coe will be named to succeed Jones.*

*Chief Jones, following the announcement of his proposed retirement issued a burning statement in which he said:*

*"No one man can run the Los Angeles police department. There are too many meddling so-called reformers and others who interfere with the work of the officers."*

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<sup>260</sup> James Quirk, *Photoplay*, May 1930. The "someone else" to whom Quirk is referring is probably Mary Miles Minter.



*"They insist that the police department devote its entire efforts to running petty gamblers out of business instead of devoting itself to the more important work of protecting the lives and property of our citizens and the visitors in our midst.*

*"Not only that, but within the department itself, among the men and officers, there is too much bickering and conniving to 'get' each other's jobs."*

\* from **Los Angeles Herald**, February 6, 1922

*There was some friction in the police probe of the slaying today and it was reported that certain detectives had asked to be given other assignments rather than continue investigating the murder with asserted misunderstanding existing.*

\* from **Chicago Herald-Examiner**, February 9, 1922

*Los Angeles--...Members of the sheriff's office made an outright declaration that they were being hindered in the Taylor investigation by an "iron-clad conspiracy between police and members of the film colony," with regard to giving information concerning Taylor...*

\* from **San Francisco Bulletin**, February 9, 1922

*Los Angeles--Police have been bribed, witnesses silenced, evidence suppressed, in a gigantic plot engineered from behind the scenes in filmland to defeat the ends of justice in the Taylor mystery--these sensational charges were under investigation today by District Attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine, hurriedly summoned from his vacation...*

\* from **Los Angeles Record**, February 9, 1922

**Officials Muff Taylor Murder Probe Hopelessly for Week; Will Woolwine End Police Chaos?**

*So many things have gone undone in the investigation of William D. Taylor's mysterious murder in the brilliantly lighted living room of his Alvarado street apartments eight days ago, that the heralded centralization of sleuthing by the district attorney's office comes as a distinct relief after a long list of official blunders.*

**BLUNDER NO. 1**

*First in the list of blunders was the summoning by detectives of a physician whose lack of thoroughness is evidenced by the fact that he pronounced the death from hemorrhage without examining the body, thus postponing for two hours knowledge that murder had been committed.*

**BLUNDER NO. 2**

*Second was the failure of the detectives to obtain the physician's name.*

**BLUNDER NO. 3**

*Third was the wanton destruction of vital evidence--fingerprints of the murderer--by either detectives or curious spectators. The chair that had evidently been carefully lifted by the murderer and placed over one leg of the dead man must have retained impressions of the criminal's finger ridges--those physical markings that never vary from childhood to death and that never are exactly duplicated in any two human beings. If fingerprints were found lacking at least the information would be obtained that the murderer had worn gloves in careful preparation for the crime. However, this chair was handled by detectives and by perhaps scores of the curious who thronged the house, even while the murdered tenant still lay stretched on the floor. When investigators thought to examine it, the chair was in another room.*

*Many other objects might have yielded fingerprint evidence--the recently used liquor glasses, for instance.*

**BLUNDER NO. 4**

*Fourth was the failure of authorities to obtain an accurate and complete photographic record of the scene of the crime as it was when discovered. Official photographs of the room and house from every angle before the body was removed or the position of anything altered would do much to aid in investigation. Only the camera lens records permanently; the human retina depends upon memory to retain its impressions and memory is often faulty, especially in murder cases. As it is there is only the description of the room made by the first few persons who found the body and unofficial newspaper photographs, sketches and diagrams made hours later.*

*The exact way in which the carpet was rolled under one foot of the murdered motion picture director might be highly important in establishing where Mr. Taylor stood when he was shot, or whether his body was carefully arranged after he fell.*

**BLUNDER NO. 5**

*The fifth serious blunder was the failure of the police to exclude the morbid and curious from the scene of the crime. The house was made a thoroughfare and playground for members of the public whose presence was unwarranted and interfered with the proper investigation. Because of this it would be almost impossible to say whether any article found missing from William D. Taylor's effects was removed by the murderer or by one of the souvenir-seeking spectators.*

**BLUNDER NO. 6**

*The sixth blunder in the investigation of this most mysterious crime was the lack of cooperation of various offices during the first week of the work. Four city offices were working on the case, possibly at cross-hazards most of the time. The city administrator's office was not certain that all papers were removed and in fact did not complete its work until yesterday--the seventh day. The police detective bureau, the prosecuting attorney's office and the sheriff's office have also worked on the case--all independently and without apparent cooperation. Happily an end is to be put to this condition at once.*

*However, the Mabel Normand letters were not discovered until yesterday, and then under circumstances indicating that they had been taken early in the investigation, examined and later surreptitiously planted so that officers could "find" them. An officer testified at the inquest that only one gun was found in the house--a Colt .32. Yesterday the officers discovered Taylor's Luger pistol, with its detachable rifle stock, which friends of the slain director had been asking about since the second day.*

**BLUNDER NO. 7**

Seventh in the list of blunders is the inadequate way in which important witnesses were questioned and their testimony followed up. No secret was made by Taylor's chauffeur, Howard Fellows, of his return to the house about 8 o'clock of the murder night, when the telephone was unanswered, and his return of the car to the garage when the doorbell likewise was unanswered. Yet the murder was six days old before Howard Fellows was questioned by the police.

**BLUNDER NO. 8**

Eighth and perhaps most reprehensible in the series of blunders, is the fact that detectives recognized early in the investigation that information was being withheld, and took no steps to force witnesses to disclose all facts in their possession. At least one witness refused, point-blank, to answer the questions of detectives--not reporters--working on the case. And got away with it.

In view of these facts, and if in spite of them the Los Angeles authorities do not run to earth the assassin of William D. Taylor, the scandal will be known to the entire nation. For the United States has its eyes on this mysterious murder case in which the "best loved man of the motion picture community" was coldly murdered from behind.

\* from **New York Herald**, February 10, 1922

A dramatic clash between the police and the sheriff of Los Angeles is the newest feature in the kinema murder mystery.

The sheriff formally charges the police authorities with succumbing to the influence brought to bear by powerful interests connected with the kinema industry with the object of checking further investigation into the circumstances in which Mr. Desmond Taylor, or Deane-Tanner, the film director, was shot in his residence at Hollywood last week.

The most important clues, states the sheriff, have not been followed up, and blind trails have been started in order to lead investigations away from certain persons high in the industry and stop the publicity which the case is receiving to the detriment of the film industry.

\* from **New York Morning Telegraph**, February 21, 1922

The search -- if one can call it a search -- being made for the slayer of Motion Picture Director Taylor in Los Angeles is getting on the nerves of everybody, and the police should either produce the killer or turn the job of hunting for him over to competent persons. It seems as if every one who knew Taylor or could in any fashion be connected with the case has been interrogated at least a half dozen times. The police and the fame-seeking District Attorney of the California metropolis apparently have questioned persons who had no more to do with Taylor's murder than the residents of the Canary Islands. One Woolwine, District Attorney, made what he called an independent investigation, with a camera-man tagging him around and reporters in his following. Woolwine posed in the Taylor house with an assistant taking the part of the picture director -- this being done to "reconstruct the crime." How would that help find the criminal? In their efforts the police and the Woolwine force have sent several reputable actresses into retirement, suffering from nervous prostration, and have cast some slight suspicion on a few persons who could not possibly kill another. The time has come for these Los Angeles sleuths and Woolwine and his actors to get off the job, and devote their time to whatever business may be at hand. Skilled detectives should take over the case and follow it to the end. Motion picture makers of Hollywood have raised a fund to hunt down Taylor's slayer, and they can put it to good use by dealing with a reputable detective agency and ignoring the incompetents of the police force and the District Attorney of Los Angeles.<sup>261</sup>

\* from **Santa Monica Outlook**, February 22, 1922

An article in a Canton, Ill, newspaper quoting a Los Angeles man in an attack on the film colony and the citrus conditions was the subject of resentment of F. H. Hamilton, secretary of the Sawtelle Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Hamilton has written letters to several newspapers and commercial bodies in this section calling their attention to this article.

Mr. Hamilton said that C. E. Snively, Jr. was formerly assistant chief of police in Los Angeles and his misrepresentations should be corrected.

The article in the Canton Daily Register containing the headline, "Says Film People Are Covering Up in Murder Mystery," reads as follows:

Regarding the Taylor murder case, C. E. Snively, Jr. of Los Angeles, writing his father, C. E. Snively of this city, says: "Everybody is stirred up over the Taylor murder mystery. It is a nasty, smelly mess, and the film people are doing a lot of 'covering up.' I do not believe Sands shot Taylor, but the blame may be attached to him to save others, and Sands will disappear on a life pension, or will turn up a suicide, or be assassinated to prevent the real story from coming out; that's my forecast."

\* from **Los Angeles Record**, Jan. 7, 1930

"You didn't tell this at the coroner's inquest?"

"No. They wouldn't let me. They tried to shake the story I told them before the inquest. They threatened me. I didn't change my story, because it was true, but I left out that part about the row at Mr. Taylor's house. Then I knew they would make more trouble for me, so I left Los Angeles right away."<sup>262</sup>

<sup>261</sup> For further articles on District Attorney Thomas Woolwine, and his sometime outrageous character and administration, see *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 24, 1915, *Los Angeles Record*, August 17, 1916, *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 1916, *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1918, *Los Angeles Evening Herald*, March 16, 1921, *Los Angeles Times*, May 20, 1922, *Los Angeles Times*, January 6, 1923, *Los Angeles Times*, June 6, 1923, *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 1925, *Los Angeles Times*, July 9, 1925.

<sup>262</sup> Peavey is talking about a quarrel between Mabel and Taylor. Whether true or no, his remarks clearly indicate there was a cover-up going on at the time of the Coroner's Inquest.

### Role of Charlotte Shelby and Mary Miles Minter in the case

Mary Miles Minter and Charlotte Shelby have been frequently brought in as suspects to the case, and with good reason. Yet neither, in my opinion, was very likely the killer; since, and among other points that might be raised, based on what we are saying it would be too fantastic to think that they themselves would have been involved with the gang of burglars. In addition, it is somewhat difficult to conceive of, say, Charlotte Shelby being a methodical assassin or the cool customer Faith MacLean described exiting the bungalow.<sup>263</sup>

#### Fragments of Marjorie Berger's Testimony

\* from Los Angeles Police transcript of interview of Marjorie Berger taken at her office, March 11, 1926, as recorded in King Vidor Papers, University of Southern California, Film Library, Special Collections. Berger was Taylor's, and also Charlotte Shelby's, tax accountant.

"Ques. What I want to find out Miss Berger is this...three questions I want to find out whether you called Mrs. Shelby or whether she called you in the morning the second of February...whether or not you knew at the hour you called whether Taylor's body was found.

"Ans. Will you let me alone for a few minutes while I talk to Mr. Marguetti? (attorney)

[appointment is made to answer question next day]

"Ques. I asked you yesterday the question whether or not you had ever a conversation with Mrs. Shelby on the morning of February 2, 1922, following the death of Taylor.

"Ans. I did

"Ques. At what time?

"Ans. At half past seven in the morning Mrs. Shelby called me.

"Ques. And would you care to relate to me what that conversation was, Mrs. Berger?

"Ans. Absolutely gladly. I arrived at my office between 7 and 7:30 on the morning of Feb. 2, 1922. My telephone was ringing. I answered the phone. Mrs. Charlotte Shelby said 'Marjorie, I have something terrible to tell you. The man that was in your office yesterday afternoon is no more. He is dead.' I said what do you mean? She said, 'He was found dead this morning.' I said, Who told you? What do you know about it? Where are you now? She said 'I am at the New Hampshire home.' I said, Well, aren't you afraid to be alone? She said, 'Well, Mr. Smith<sup>264</sup> stayed in the house last night.' I asked her whether she had informed the family of this terrible thing and she said yes. No, I better not say that, I think she said yes. I then hung up the receiver because I was greatly shocked and grieved. That's all.

"Ques. Was anything further said between you and her in connection with the case? I will say at or about that time did she tell you how she communicated or given the information to the rest of the family?

"Ans. I do not recollect. I am not sure. She did state that Lasky Studios had called her up and informed her about half an hour previous to her calling me.

[Berger goes on to state that Shelby called her around 6 or 6:30 (pm) and the other time at 8 or 8:30 (pm) looking for Mary, the night of the murder.]

Based on this testimony, Shelby, as well as Minter, could have found out about the murder not longer after the Lasky people did that night through certain channels, including perhaps family friend District Attorney Thomas Woolwine. This was perhaps why Deputy District Attorney Jim Smith was with Shelby that night -- to protect her. Maybe Minter, along with other certain studio people, entered bungalow that night after the murder to see Taylor's body, which would account for the blonde hairs. Though granted unlikely, it ought not be assumed impossible.

As to the claim Shelby had most motive to kill Taylor, this Shelby later credibly answered herself when she said that if she had killed Taylor because of his alleged violating of Mary, why would she not have killed James Kirkwood; who had gotten Mary pregnant a number of years earlier? That she was jealous, as such as Det. William Cahill and Woolwine (reportedly) believed, may have some plausibility to it. Yet if Shelby was indeed the assassin, do we then assume the pre-murder burglaries are unrelated to Taylor's death, and that Shelby's acting not dissimilarly to the burglars (in allegedly shooting Taylor) was just a coincidence?

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<sup>263</sup> Bruce Long: "Contrary to what has been extensively written and rumored, the Memorandum ['Re. James Kirkwood and Mary Miles Minter' and written by Detective Lieutenant Leroy Sandersons] states that Faith MacLean said the person she saw 'could not have been a woman dressed in man's clothing.'" *Taylorology*, issue 97 (2007). In addition and with respect to Det. Cahill's hypothesis, if Shelby was disguised as a man would she have presented herself that way to Taylor when she allegedly embraced and shot him? Others, however, attempt to get around this dilemma by asserting that Shelby hired a gunman for the deed.

<sup>264</sup> i.e., Deputy District Attorney Jim Smith

## The Identity of the Murderer

*"Undersheriff Biscailluz late in the day admitted the Sheriff's office is working hard on three 'leads' tending to connect prominent film people with the slaying. The Sheriff's office holds little credence in the theory that Sands committed the crime."*<sup>265</sup>

Almost right after the murder, any number of extraordinary stories and witnesses came forth, a pattern carried on for many years afterward. Apparently many stories were concocted by publicity seekers and newspaper people attempting to cash in on and exploit the drama. Nonetheless, it is conceivable that some of the stories were actually brought about through the efforts of the killer (and perhaps the efforts of his friends) in an effort to disguise the crime and further confuse the investigation.

If the killer was merely one among a gang of "poor" criminals (bootleggers, drug dealers) who would have felt the need to invent stories and produce false witnesses to protect them? Not probable since they would not have resources to employ actors and pretend witnesses or suspects. A very rich and powerful industry person, who hired a gunman, on the other hand, could more easily in such a position to effect such. The killer may have been found out within first day or so, but because he was so powerful, he could black mail others, including the D.A., and so the various cover-ups may have begun at this point. As well, if he were very powerful he could, and given his penchant for invading others' lives, use blackmail on other officials if, in a given instance, it was deemed necessary. By "the killer," I do not mean the gunman per se, but rather someone who employed the gunman.

It is conceivable then that if the killer was an industry higher-up that he participated in the cover-up on some level, and orchestrated false suspects and witness to confuse everyone. Because of perhaps a certain disdain for Normand and Taylor, some of his associates, whether knowing of his guilt or not, were perhaps more willing to cooperate than they otherwise might have been.

The following is a list of *some* of Hollywood's *known* most powerful figures at the time. This is not to necessarily imply guilt to anyone only to mention *some* who *might* have been in such a position to have pulled off such a scheme: Frank Garbutt, Jesse Lasky, Charles Eyton, Sol Wurtzel, Abraham Lehr, Carl Laemmle, Joseph Schenck, Mack Sennett, Thomas Ince, Richard Rowland. There is nothing particular about anyone of these to lead us offhand to think they would be suspects, except perhaps for Sennett. However, Sennett's being the killer is highly unlikely, for a number of reasons, not least of which is interpreting him as someone powerful enough to have manipulated city hall.

In conclusion, it is and has been my belief for a long time that the murder was connected to the burglaries of the bungalow that occurred shortly before hand. In addition, I am inclined to think that the killing was something "political" rather than or less so personal. Since the war Hollywood had become more of a haven for easy money and in turn organized crime; so that in some measure and form organized crime (that is to say *some* form of organized crime, and not by any means necessarily the stereotype of the "Mugsy" and "Lefty" sort) was the principal force behind the murder; though yes there may have been some ancillary personal grievances involved. Fear rules! And when fear rules then fear gets a larger share of the take.<sup>266</sup> Moreover, that there were *so* much and many false stories, leads and hoaxes to explain what happened, suggests that some persons powerful were covering for the killer, and why do this if the murder were merely a crime of passion?

Where the inquiry otherwise can be continued from this point, I leave for others to take up and consider.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 9, 1922.

<sup>266</sup> Nicole Carlone, a great-grand niece of Woolwine, author and Taylor case historian, in a running internet commentary on the mystery, makes the following pertinent remarks and based on a private journal Woolwine kept (and which is currently in the possession of some of his present day relatives and descendants.):

"One of the major revelations that came out of Tom Woolwine's notes was that Taylor's death was much more brutal then presented by the coroner's office.

"Frank Nance, as seen holding an inquest below, was pressured by Paramount to keep the medical examiner's report secret from the public and present the public with a whitewashed version of what really happened to the murdered director.

"When Woolwine viewed the medical examiner's report he saw Taylor had not only been shot, but had suffered several blows to the head, internal bleeding, bruises over his body and several broken ribs. These injuries were inflicted upon him after he was shot and as he lay dying."

<sup>267</sup> Regarding likelihood of Taylor's murder being, after all, a premeditated political assassination of sorts; including perhaps as well a scenario where a "kook" is put up and incited to the deed; in order that a third person could reap it benefits, the following may be added. What might be the said "benefits," if we assume *purely* criminal motives, some that can be suggested are:

1) Induce fear, chaos and mistrust in Hollywood and toppling some of its de facto leaders; while in the midst of which assailing bastions of financial power in order to gain control of it. If such speculation were sufficiently plausible, then it might be a good idea to find out where control of Hollywood went to or tended to move to from 1922 to 1929; and this may provide a lead.

2) If, for the sake of discussion, the culprit(s) was involved in the occult, we can expand the possible motive further by including following orders from, placating, making offering to, and or what we might denote "scoring points" with forces and persons of an authentically sinister character. If so, this also permits us to include jealousy and the desired demise of others than just Taylor, such as Normand and Minter, to play a role in what actuated the crime.

In support of such conjecture, we can point to the seeming elaborate efforts of some person or persons to create distractions and red herrings for investigators. That in some such instances, as in the yellow journalistic reporting and editorials (assuming a connection), this necessarily involved people tied into big money; and who had both the means and wherewithal to wage such a long, drawn out, and years ongoing campaign of smear tactics, outrageous distortion, and misinformation.

## APPENDIX E

### Excerpts from a Series of Interviews with Minta Durfee Arbuckle; Done by Don Schneider with Stephen Normand

*The original transcripts of these interviews were originally housed at The Movie Museum, 408 N. Water St., Owosso, Michigan 48867, though at present are in the possession of film historian Paul Gierucki. For separate and additional interview material with Minta see Stuart Oderman's The Keystone Krowd. The manuscript for her unpublished autobiography and which had been tentatively titled My Clown Cried or else My Clown Speaks (there are two given, the "Clown" referred to being her former husband Roscoe Arbuckle), can be found among the Special Collections of the Margaret Herrick Library, Fairbanks Center for Motion Picture Study, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Beverly Hills, California.*

*\* Taped Sunday, July 21, 1974 Reel 3A [Conducted at Minta Durfee's home in Los Angeles]*

Minta: I haven't seen the show (the musical, Mack and Mabel) yet, I'm only telling you from hearsay, but I understand that it was even in the papers, but I'm going to say this even before I see it on Wednesday matinee, and that is, that wasn't any young girl, that I know of, who was as beautifully bred; and she was absolutely a FIEND for reading and learning. After she'd get thru with her bumps and bruises and everything else that happened in the old days at Keystone, she'd go home and run a bath with Epsom salts and she would lie there until it was cold, and she'd take a book into the bathtub and read and read and read and READ. And when I was told by someone who had seen the show, that this man playing Mr. Sennett says to her, "Why you can't even read," -- that breaks my heart, tears came to my eyes when I heard such a thing.

She also was the type, that if she KNEW you, and she knew that you were doing anything, that was different and it was something that interested her, after she got thru her bath and had something to eat, she'd get dressed and go over and visit you, or visit somebody else, and she never thought much of the time of the evening, that never seemed to make any difference to Mabel, and it didn't make any difference to anybody else.

So when she went over to William Desmond Taylor's home, she had heard that he spoke French beautifully, and she was French and Irish and so she had been studying French, but as you well know, you have to carry on a conversation to be able to perfect yourself in any language, you can read it all your lifetime, but if you don't have somebody to talk to -- I learned that the first year I went to Paris. You've GOT to have somebody to talk to.

And that is why it is so MEAN of people to make remarks about her, because I'm telling you, I KNOW this! That she never LOVED any other man in the world but Mack Sennett. And at the ending of her life, after she had been struck on the head by this Mae Busch, and she had refused to go back into the studio again, because she already had her wedding dress ready to marry, and this woman came and was with us and no one liked her when she came, this Mae Busch, and then at the end of her life, when she finally became tubercular, and I worked in, and played the heavy and finished my four years contract in "Mickey" -- and that little thing would have a hemorrhage of the lungs and then she would take a swig out of a bottle, to stop the bleeding, and the coughing, and do all of her own stunts, nobody ever did any stunts for her, and if you've seen "Mickey" you'll be amazed to see that girl sliding down, where she'd fallen, she'd have been not only killed but she'd been crushed to pieces -- from this mansion where we made "Mickey" over on Western and 24th Street -- and that day, in the morning, she and I were talking, she said, "Oh, I better take my goop," -- she always called it 'goop,' "Because I feel like I'm gonna have a little hemorrhage."

"Well," I said, "Don't do your work, don't do that scene today, do something else dear."

And she said, "Oh, no, that's the way the schedule goes. No, I'll do it."

Lew Cody worked with us in that, and he had a great sense of humor, terrific sense of humor, and was a marvelously-read man, and they were very great friends, we were ALL great friends, and we all liked each other very much, and her nurse told me, who is still living that she finally married Lew Cody, when she was a complete invalid, a bed-ridden invalid. And he was getting sick, and finally was in a wheelchair.

And one of the nice things I want to tell you about him, when Mabel was getting so bad, in such BAD condition, and she had really made her will, but she was going to will something to Lew Cody, he said, "Don't you dare to do that, because I've never supported you." They'd only been married a couple of years when she died, and then he died. She died out at Monrovia, of tuberculosis, and I was living in New York and my sister was here, and she saw her the day before she passed on. And Lew Cody passed on out here.

But Mabel was one of the most wonderful girls that ever lived. She never ate a meal at night that she didn't feed somebody, if she knew they were hungry.

Our cars, we always had big cars, we lived at the beach because Roscoe loved the water, and so did she, they were very wonderful in the water together. But there'd either be a great big box of groceries, with her name, on the way home, to please leave it. One place was the grandma of Blanche Sweet. Or there'd be a check for somebody.

And when we worked on the streets and in the parks, if she saw a child with a scratch or a bruise, or a little runny nose -- and if I was working with her, she'd say, "Mintrattie," -- and by the way, she would give you a nickname if she loved you dearly, so she always called me, 'Min-trattie' instead of 'Minta' and Roscoe, because, she called him 'Big Otto' because over at Lincoln Park why there was an elephant over there that belonged to the Selig Company, called 'Big Otto,' and she called him 'Big Otto.'

And she called Mr. Sennett 'Nappy' because he would often have his hand across the front of his tummy (like a napkin). That was her love salutations.

In this, I understand, in this show, the man playing Mr. Sennett, called her a dope fiend and everything else, and she was NEVER a dope fiend, and she never, never had any injections or anything of the kind. The only thing that she ever took was this cough syrup, and this was given to her by a doctor and administered to her by her nurse, Julie Benson, who is still living, -- she was with her for a number of years.

I can't rave ENOUGH about her. I need her to help me because they never made one girl like Mabel Normand. I remember one time after she passed on, she was only 33, why I was down at Hamburger store, which for years has been the May Company, and Mose (sic) Hamburger saw my mother and I walking along, and he came up

and said "Hello. Well, Mama Durfee, we've lost our beautiful child. I'm so heart-broken I don't know what to do. Do you know that little thing bought \$15,000.00 worth of baby layettes, she loved children so much. THIS was Mabel Normand." And for anyone to have her depicted other than a beautiful - she was a little imp and she was a little imp, and she was a lot of fun, and she liked to play jokes on people. Things of that kind. But she was only a child, she wasn't of age when I knew her, at first. I haven't seen the show yet, but I go on Wednesday to see it, matinee, and believe me, I imagine I'll take my pen in hand and write to Mr. Merrick, because they better change it before they get to New York. I really think that when people do that sort of thing, they ought to be SUED, absolutely sued. To leave such an impression.

This young man that I am talking about, Stuart Oderman, he's a school teacher by profession, but he's a wonderful musician, and his whole love is so nostalgic about - he LOVES everything that is nostalgic about pictures. And he plays for the museum in New York, and every place that he can. He's going to play here at the Masquers, August the first, for old pictures, and he went to see it, and he came back and was almost in tears because he too had heard from, and not only from me but from other people, what a remarkable, wonderful girl she was.

She was just a CHILD, absolutely, a beautiful, beautiful child, and I'm almost dreading to go see it, but the tickets have been sent me, so I shall go. And you'll hear more from me after it's over with, too.

Don: Do you remember first meeting Mabel?

Minta: Oh, yes! I met her right over at Keystone. You see, we came home from the Orient in 1913, and it's a strange thing that the stage seemed to be losing its glamour because every company that came out, they would end their contracts, like on the Orpheum Circuit, and the Sullivan-Considine Circuit, or the plays, the legitimate plays, they would all quit here, and the first thing you know, everybody was meandering over to the Sennett Studio because we didn't have any scenery, all you had to do was to lift the lock on the great big wooden fence, or gate, and come in.

Because we made everything in parks, Echo Park, that's down where Aimee Semple McPherson's big church is. And we worked in Griffith Park, and we worked in the streets, or if there was a fire, somebody went to the fire with a camera, and some cop, and one girl would usually run along, and then we'd make the picture up, the story up, afterward. See, we didn't have any picture writers, for years, for the first two years we were there, each comedian worked out his own gags. And we'd sit around a table, and maybe Mr. Sennett would say, "Now that gag looks like it would be good for Ed Kennedy, or that would be good for Chester Conklin. Maybe we started out with the idea that it was going to be some gag for MY husband, or for Charlie, but that's the way that we made our pictures. They were all spontaneous and every one of our Keystone Cops ought to have a dowry (dollar seat?) in heaven for what they did, enough to KILL them, and for such little pay.

And when I think what they pay some men today, who must have mattresses and these great big cardboard boxes to break their falls, and all that kind of thing, and maybe they'll work for a hundred, or five hundred or a thousand dollars, and our darlings, those wonderful, wonderful dedicated people, we were the most dedicated company that ever lived. And we were all a big family, and everybody there had always been in some kind of show business, in the entertainment world, every one. And each one would come in; I'll never forget the day that Slim Summerville came in, I think he was about 6' 3", and he probably weighed 95 pounds, and with him was little Bobby Dunn, who hit him at about the hip line, and they came in from a carnival show that had closed, and Bobby Dunn was famous for doing dives with two white horses into a pool, and of course Slim did whatever they do in carnivals, then he loved to play pool. He was a pool shark.

So of course, Sennett, when he saw this combination, "All right, stay. Just get along with the rest of us." And that's the way that everybody built up the (sic) Keystone. Today the pictures are classics, they never could be made again, under any living circumstances, because you'd NEVER get dedicated people. And there's hardly anyone that's in pictures that sometime or other didn't work at Keystone. Of course WE were there four solid years. Six days a week, and from 8 until 6 in the evening. And I wouldn't have missed it for all - as they say - for all the tea in China. Because it was the greatest feeling of friendship and hard work and we were making people happy and if it had not been for my husband's ability to direct well - after he joined it wasn't long before he was directing, because he'd done a lot of tabloid musical comedy, which we had when we were first married, and he was wise. He was great for having his own company, as he called it, because everybody wanted to work for him, and they knew exactly what he wanted, and therefore, he KEPT UP their releases, and WE first went to Keystone, there was no such thing as a release. It was catch as catch can, because there had to be three reels in New York City or there wouldn't have been any Keystone, so I'll never forget the evening that Mr. Sennett asked Roscoe, Mabel and I to go with him to the famous old Van Nuys Hotel (downtown LA), whose cuisine was considered one of the finest in America. And Mr. Sennett LOVED to eat. So finally, before dinner was clear over he handed Roscoe a check, and he said, "This is yours, Big Boy, because we have NOW got the release, and we owe it to you because you've kept up the reels going," and he handed us a thousand dollar check. And of course neither one of us had ever had one of those in our lifetime.

Don: Was it three reels a week?

Minta: About three reels a week to get out. Sometime 2 1/2, but always 2, always 2. But he had his OWN, you might say, group of people, who worked with him all the time.

And another reason why they liked him, he always saw to it that they had a good lunch.

Don: They need energy.

Minta: Well, they needed the energy, but I know one time, down at the beach, they worked all day on Saturday, in the sand and the water, and there was a very beautiful restaurant, Venice, at Venice. And these boys had just worked - and the girls, too, everybody had worked, I had worked in it too, but WE were living at the beach, so of course we would be going home. And we went down to this cafe at Venice. And one of the boys looked up and he said, "Chief," -- most of them called him 'Chief,' Can we -- ?"

He said, "Eat what you want. Now you've worked just like BEAVERS today. Now, eat whatcha want."

So the chap who always acted more or less, well, as his chauffeur and he was his right hand bower, as they say. Joe Bordeaux, he was wonderful. He got up and came to him and said, "Do you really mean it?"

"Of COURSE I mean it."

Anyway, when he took the bill back to Mr. Sennett, Sennett said, "My goodness sakes alive! Roscoe, that's a terribly big luncheon bill."

"All right, take it out of my salary, and I shall never direct another picture for you as long as I live. I'll just work."

Sennett got excited. "Oh, my goodness, Gi-gi-give that to me! Give it to me, give it to me, give it here."

Because he knew there was NOBODY keeping up the releases, like Roscoe was. And never had any trouble with anyone. Charlie was a fine director, but he was a slow director, and he had never really directed until he came to us. Really directed. He had worked in his own vaudeville act, which he took from his father, "A Night in an English Music Hall" is the way he came over (to) the Sullivan and Considine Circuit, and besides that, he did lots of tiny little intricate little things with his hands, little things that he played with, and he would do that over and over and over again. -- and Roscoe and Mabel they did so many things that were activity, running and falling and dancing and riding in these old jalopies, falling out of them and all that kind of thing, so with theirs, it was easier to make progress. That was the idea.

And when they took a poll all over the world, who was the best-liked comedian, believe it or not, my husband was the one who came up with it, that he was the best-liked comedian all over the world, after the Keystone pictures GOT all over the world, and the reason for it was, he was SUCH a BOY, had a boyish countenance, and all these foreign mothers love their boys, you know, THEIR BOYS are always the first. The girls don't amount to very much.

So that is the reason, and the other reason is, he never did anything that a child would pick up from him, that wasn't right. Charlie had one bad habit, or he had a couple of them. One of them was, he would put his fingers up to his nose (thumb his nose), and the other was that he would be eating with a fork and he would take the fork and scratch his head, or scratch under his arm pits, and things like that, (that are vulgar) -- well, children pick up these things from a person that they LIKE. And he had to be admonished about that a great many times, and he finally cut it out. But that was the trouble with him when he first came. And that is a certain type of English comedy, doing those kinds of things.

And my husband was the first man to sign a million dollar contract. That was not a million dollars for each picture, that was a million dollars a year. That was done with Paramount. Mr. Adolph Zukor signed him to that.

Don: Can you tell us about the occasion when you first met Mabel Normand?

Minta: Well, the occasion that is amusing to me, firstly, we had been for some months in the Orient, doing Gilbert and Sullivan and comic operas, and we came home, up to San Francisco, and there was NOTHING doing, so we came down to Los Angeles, which is our home, my birthplace, and -- Roscoe was always an eager beaver to work. He LOVED to work, just loved to work. And he went around, trying to find jobs, but there were no jobs.

So someone told him to go out on the Big Red Car, which used to run out to a place that is now Glendale, that was called Tropico in those days, because of the heat, I guess, and get off at Effie Street, and there was some kind of shindig, that's the expression the man said to him, "There's some kind of a shindig going on there, Arbuckle, and maybe it's something you'd fit into."

Well, Roscoe always looked like Jackie Gleason. When he was dressed up, he was immaculate, looked fine in his clothes; he was not sloppy-fat, he was hard fat, because he weighed 15 pounds when he was born. He was very athletic, agile. And this car ran about once every hour. So he got on the big red car and came out and got off at Effie Street. And when he stepped off the car, he stepped into dust pretty near up to his waistline, and he had on white shoes, white trousers, a blue coat, straw hat, and of course a white shirt and a blue tie.

So he saw this gate, and he opened the gate, and went in on the stage, it was nothing but a wooden stage, nothing in there, but a little 'igloo' as I call them, with a little open door someplace or other, three or four of those up in there, and he walked around, and there was nobody around, there wasn't a living soul, and he started to hum, and finally a door opened, and a man with a great big head of hair, graying hair and a mouthful of tobacco juice, opened the door and said, "You'd be here tomorrow morning at eight o'clock" and banged the door to. Well, of course when you work on the stage, those kind of things never happen to you. You usually have to bring your credentials, such as a picture, and (a list of) what your wardrobe consists of, and what you can do and what you can't do. Well, he thought he better hang around a little bit longer, because he knew the car probably wouldn't be back for another half hour, and so he was wandering around again and he started to sing, and he had a gorgeous voice, and so he was just over to lift the handle on this wooden door to get out, when this door opened up again, and the same head came out, and more of the same tobacco juice was spit out, and this fellow pointed to him this time, and he said, "Look here, Big Boy, you be here tomorrow morning at EIGHT O'CLOCK. How do YOU know, you may be a STAR someday." -- And THAT MAN was Mack Sennett. That's the way Roscoe met there.

So when he got home, he talked with my mother, and she said, "Well, dear, if I were you, I think I'd go out tomorrow morning."

He said, "Well, I don't know what kind of show business it is, Ma'am, but it's terrible, why it's ridiculous. I never heard of anything like that."

"Well now, dear, you've looked around for work and there isn't any; why don't you go out and just SEE what it's going to be."

So, he'd do anything that SHE asked him to do, anyway, and he went out.

He went in, and the moment he found out that it was Mr. Sennett, Mr. Sennett said, "You're with US." He said, "Stick around, stick around."

And later on, in came Mabel, this beautiful, beautiful, dark-haired beauty, a little beauty, and Ford Sterling, I don't know, somebody else, and Alice Davenport, we called her "Mother Davenport," she was the mother-in-law of Wally Reid. He married Dorothy Davenport. And from the Davenport family comes the famous Fannie Davenport, one of the greatest theatrical women that we ever had in the history of the American theater.

So the moment that Mabel and Roscoe met, she being so petite and beautiful with dark hair, and he a big, boyish, golden blonde, his hair almost gold at that time, golden, and they just looked at one another and they just kind of went over and stood together, and Sennett said, "Well, I guess you two better work together." That's the way they got together. And you never saw anything more perfectly matched in your whole lifetime than those two together. Never.

When Roscoe passed away, his hair had become a light brown, but it was just the color of gold when I married him, just as golden as any golden thing you've ever seen.

They were such water dogs, they loved the water, they did everything under the sun in the water.

But I think one of the most famous things that I have in my own autobiography, is this story:

We lived at the beach and we had our first servant there. So at eleven o'clock every Sunday morning Okie used to bring down those blue and white Japanese tablecloths and put them on the sand, and our friends who were going to come down to swim - as a matter of fact, we had 35 bathing suits in the basement of our house, anyhow. They just left them there. Mabel of course, she would come down, but she had always rented an apartment, but she came down every Sunday and she and Roscoe would SWIM from in front of our house, to the Venice pier and back again, at 11 o'clock every Sunday morning.

So one Sunday morning they came back, and instead of the two of them getting out of the water immediately and coming up on the sand, there was something going on, you couldn't make up your mind just exactly what it was, but I could see her arm over something, and I don't know what it was over, and nobody else did. Some people were standing, and of course all the strolling people on the strand, naturally came every day -- it became a regular excitement on Sunday, to see these people dining, all these stars, and people from the theater, and they were all standing there, and nobody could make up his mind WHAT IT WAS that was going on out there.

Well, what it was, as they were swimming back, from the Venice pier, up came a dolphin, and instead of Mabel being frightened like anybody would, -- because NONE of us knew anything about dolphins in THOSE days, -- she just put her arm over the neck of this dolphin and he swam right along with them.

And do you know, EVERY SUNDAY, for nearly a year, he came and swam with them, down and back, until one day they came back and then he disappeared, and they never saw him again. Isn't that interesting? Isn't that wonderful?

Don: What was the address of the house eat the beach, what street or what?

Minta: I couldn't tell it to you right now, from anything in the world. There's one thing that I cannot even remember. Never could. And that's numbers. Because sometimes, in the years that we lived down there, we didn't live in the same house, we didn't OWN this house, we would rent.

I know it was across from a man by the name of Wiggins, he was one of the biggest men of the Chamber of Commerce in Los Angeles; we lived across the street from him. But I was trying to think of it the other day, but it's not necessary for me to worry myself about that now.

Don: Is it North or South of the pier?

Minta: It would be North of the -- because the strand, the ocean, was South of us. And so, anyway, Nat Goodwin and all those different people, you see, they used to RENT the houses, we didn't own the house, we didn't buy it, but this house was quite large, this particular one, and it had the glass porch on it, that Roscoe and I would sleep on, when the house was full of people like my mother and sister and brother would come down and anybody else that stayed over.

And there was a house in the rear of it, where the room for the servant Okie, was. So that's where I was, we were sleeping there at night. Or rather, that morning we were there, asleep. I wasn't asleep because I've never slept much unfortunately. And when we heard this terrible "Unnnhhhh, unnnhhhh" groaning, I was immediately up; Roscoe was asleep; we were sleeping on the front porch, of course all the family were inside. Add up comes this cab driver with Mabel with blood all over from top to bottom, where this awful Mae Busch had struck her over the head with a vase. That's as far as I'll go right now. I'm getting hoarse.

#### ROSCOE AND MINTA'S MOTHER

Minta: He didn't want to live any other place, she used to have to drive us away, she said, "I'm not going to have any of that business living with me, and you're going to come home to mother, and you're going to, -- you're married, you're going to be yourself." But that didn't always work out, because he was always wanting her to be with him. And everybody else had the same attitude toward her.

So, consequently, I'll never forget, he had a wonderful write-up. He did the Mikado, and they said he did one of the greatest Mikado's that's been done by anybody, in the history of comic opera. And the newspapers had written him up, and everyone, and I'm trying to think of the name of the critic at the time in Los Angeles, everybody was frightened to death of, because he was so critical.

So we came home between the matinee and the night show, and the streetcar went right past our door, and it wasn't very far, because it was -- everything was down on Main Street, and the farthest you ever went down there, was as far as Sixth Street (it was residential by there), and we were working down at First Street, at the Ferris Hartman Comic Opera Company. And we came home, and while the dinner was being put on the table, he and my young brother, Paul, who was only about 7 years old, they used to save all the corncobs and these corncobs, throwing them at one another, in between, while waiting... (Excerpt ends here.)

*From interview, taped Aug. 27, 1974, Reel 6B, In Minta's living room, with Stephen Normand, grand nephew of Mabel Normand*

*Started taping in the middle, after talking quite a while in the living room. Minta was telling Stephen about Mabel.*



Minta: Imagine, \$15,000.00 for the baby layettes.

Stephen: She was very good, wasn't she.

Minta: Well, yes. I can't say enough. I know there's a God in the Heaven, and I KNOW that she's sitting right up there with Him.

Stephen: I'm SURE she is. I've really enjoyed listening to all your nice things you say about her. It's nice to speak with someone who really knew her and lived with her and knows the TRUTH about her, and not all this scandalous rubbish.

Minta: She was a terrible tease, she was a tease, you know. This story, I have to tell about Charlie Chaplin, because we met Chaplin, and he was so typical, of what he is, a low-caliber background family. When we met him, he had on a black and white suit, I called a race-track suit, you know what I mean? Black and white? We were alerted that he was coming; Mr. Sennett got a wire and he read it to Roscoe and Mabel and myself, and it said, "Please see this man. He's on the Sullivan and Considine Circuit, and he'll be so-and so and so-and so."

So we went to see him, and he was sitting in kind of like a loge, and he had an old, worn-out Inverness coat, you know what I mean, what an Inverness coat is, and a silk plug hat that was kind of battered down a bit, and his gag was, that his cuffs were on strings, you see, on his arms. He had a McHooley's cat, as they say, and he's leaning out and he's looking down trying to watch a performance on the stage. So finally, he gets so enthusiastic about it and all, - this is the way he patted his hands (the fingers sort of limply hit the heel of the other hand and slid off toward the body) then he fell right out flat, did a pratfall right on the stage. That was the act of "A Night In An English Music Hall;" he had taken it from his father. His father did this all over England, and probably Europe all his lifetime.

So we met afterward, backstage, Sennett, Roscoe, Mabel and I, and Mr. Sennett said to him, "Wouldn't you like to come down to Keystone."

He said, "Well, I have another week down at San Diego,"-- that was finishing the end of the tour. See, the whole media was going OUT, as far as theater was concerned, at that time. Everything finished in Los Angeles. That's why everybody migrated to Sennett, because you weren't worried about spoiling the scenery or anything else, when they would open the door and walk in. (They used no scenery, but shot on actual locations.)

So he came, and he was very, very, very shy. And of course I found, that people with real genius often are very shy. My husband was shy, except when he was working, or knew you very well. And SHE was shy (Mabel.) When you took Mabel and introduced her to anybody, in a large party, she didn't burst in like Liza Minelli or somebody like that, she was SHY. Roscoe was shy, she was shy, Charlie was shy. And Chester Conklin was very, very shy. Only when they were working with you, that was different, you see.

So he came out, and we didn't have much you could hide behind, but he would stand way off and watch what they were doing. Well of course, it's an entirely different media than the stage. So finally, Sennett said to me, he always called me 'Mrs. A,' he said, "Mrs. A., you're going to have to work with this Englishman, we can't pay him a salary," as little as it was, "unless you -- I'm going to put you with him, because you get along with everybody. You LIKE everybody. He's very peculiar."

I thought it was funny that Sennett called me for a rehearsal, and I thought to myself, I don't know who I'm going to rehearse with. I wasn't working those few days. Well, when we got there, they'd built up just a piece of plasterboard, they had a picture on the wall, and they had a table there, and on both sides they had a chair; they had a door there (on two sides of a U) and a door here. Now I never looked up to see that there was a ceiling on the set, you see, we never had those things. I thought this was funny (odd) sic.

He said, "This is for Chaplin. See what he can do."

So everybody knew that he hated water. And believe me he HATED water. And so he and I were sitting there and my hair hung way down to here (her hips) and my husband was very fussy about my hair being wet and not being dry before I took a drive home. So I'm sitting on the side and he's sitting there, and he's supposed to be making love to me, and finally he asked me to come and sit on his lap, so I go over and sit on his knee and THESE DEVILS - this was his initiation, they pulled this tarpaulin and both of us were WET to the skin. Absolutely, we were drowned. He was so MAD that he ran around like a wild ass of the desert, he was so mad, he just didn't know what in the world he was doing.

And finally somebody walked up to him, I don't know who it was, and calmed him down.

Now my husband had to send down to Sunset Blvd. -- you know how far it is, there was a little hair-dressing parlor down there, and he brought back the machine that dries your hair? I simply soaked to the skin. Well, he was so mad, he didn't know what to do.

Now here's another thing that Mabel did. This is typically Mabel. He (Chaplin) wore the same shoes, the same sox (sic), and the same shirt, and the same tie, for TWO solid weeks. He was not too cleanly about -- see, Americans bathe, Americans are great for bathing. I won't say that about Europeans. And I lived abroad quite a lot. So Mabel brought this on -- it used to come in a nice box, like a Christmas box might be, you'd have a shirt, you'd have a tie, a handkerchief and you'd have a pair of socks, that matched.

And she said, "Charlie, I'm giving this to you as kind of a little gift..." (lost a few words)

And that night she came down and had dinner with us at the beach, stayed over night, she said, "I wonder how long he'll wear it before he has it washed?" And we counted exactly two weeks and a half. So she said to him,

"Why don't you have yours (washed)?"

We had one director who wouldn't direct him because he smelled so badly.

Stephen: I didn't realize that about him, that Charlie was so dirty. It's too much.

Minta: He was PLENTY dirty. He was a very clever man, but he was plenty dirty. And when he was here this last time, he came out here (to Hollywood), he was so afraid of assassination that his own son, Sydney, told me, "My dad is scared to death."

Now he has a star on the Walk of Fame, and they wanted to put his feet into the Chinese, Grauman's, and I won a bet of \$20.00 from someone, I said "He will NEVER do it, in the world."

"Oh," they said, "You're jealous, or you're mad."

"No," I said, "I'm not mad. I don't give a darn, but he won't do it. Because I know WHY." So when they tried to get him to do it, they wouldn't do it. "Because I know WHY."

So when they tried to get him to do it, they wouldn't do it, and he wouldn't have his picture taken, looking at his star, you know, he was so afraid of being assassinated, because -- he left FIVE GIRLS pregnant without any protection, money protection. That's why President Truman gets to him, so he couldn't come back to America. And the American Legion, he would not pay his taxes, and in the very beginning, when he started to get checks, he would take them and he'd put them down in Mexico in a bank down there. See, he's always been a Communist, and he'll DIE a Communist, but he was Communistic, if you'll watch his pictures, as funny as they are, as marvelous as they are, Communism runs thru the whole darn thing. So, don't you think the Chamber of Commerce was scared to death because somebody had built a little statue of him, they wanted to put it at Vine on the street, on Vine and Hollywood Blvd., and they were told if they did, a bomb would be put under it.

And so when -- I talked to him on the phone, you know. Three different times. He lived out at the Beverly Hills Hotel, and Rachel, somebody, his secretary, she said to me, "Charlie wants to know if you're coming to the Academy Awards."

I said, "No, I'm not, I don't have a beau to take me, and I can't go alone."

Now I'll tell you something else. It sounds very conceited, but it's the truth. If I had one call, I had a hundred calls, from people saying, "You are the natural person to give him his Award (Oscar) because you're the first person who ever worked with it, and I did nine pictures with him. All thru his getting accustomed to doing pictures."

So finally I talked to him, and he said, "I'm awfully sorry, Minta, that you're not coming."

"No, I won't be there, Charlie. But I wish you a lot of good luck."

And he did the same thing in New York City, but they had this great big \$100 thing, you know about that in New York, where you would meet Charlie Chaplin and you'd get an autograph, and have hor d'oeuvres with him, and he sat up in the box; he disappeared the MOMENT that his picture was over because he -- now that cost people a hundred dollars a piece. That isn't a very nice thing to do. He should have gone downstairs and shaken hands with people and everything.

Stephen: I just want to step inside a minute...I go on Saturday.

Minta: I always have a saying, God go before you, making easy and successful your way. That's my little send-off to everybody. ...You're hearing a lot of stuff. It's all true. Every word I speak, is the truth.

The things I tell you, I know. They're not things that somebody else told me.

He (Charlie) had a disease when he came to us. And he smelled so badly of idofoam (sic) that we had one director that loathed him, and he wouldn't direct him under any circumstances, because of the way he smelled. He said, "Don't you dare let him touch you." He lived in the servants' quarters at the Athletic Club downtown.

When you went out with him at night, with a crowd of people, to get him to put his share of the tip in, was like pulling teeth.

However, I nearly had a fit when he called me up; he called me up after I was on the British Broadcast, and he wasn't in town, he was in Mexico, and he called me up and he said, "Minta, I missed you, but I understand you spoke well of me."

And do you know what I said to him on the telephone? "Yes, I spoke well of you, Charlie, but I DID tell them that you were a little Commie."

He (jumped and) said, "What did you say to me?!"

"I said that you're a little Communist, a Commie."

And he laughed, "You don't really mean it."

"Why, you know I DO mean it, and it's true."

"When are you leaving?"

"I'm leaving tomorrow on the Queen Mary, coming home. I'd been over there a long time. (sic)"

"Gee, I thought I was going to have a chance to see you."

"No." But I WILL give him this credit, it was fabulous for him to do: he had a magnum of champagne and he had a beautiful bouquet of roses for my stateroom, and he called me just before they cut the phone off, on the boat. That's the nicest thing he did, where I'm concerned.

It was very easy for ME to work with him, because he was very moody, you know. Do you know that his hair was black, and they say this is a very strange thing: when he got into a 'blue,' the doldrums, so help me God, -- he was a young man, right along here you know (at the temples), it turned gray. And the moment that he felt happy again, it went away.

And you know that Syd Chaplin was his half brother and Syd had been trying to get him to go in the ocean, you know, and go swimming, -- water never touched him very often, unless he drank it. But all these things I've told you about him, but as far as being clever we KNOW how clever he was, we don't have to talk about that, --

Stephen: It's like I say, you've probably seen all these pictures (stills he brought in a folder) I didn't want to BORE you with the pictures --

Minta: No-o. You never bore me. Honey, you NEVER bore me with these kind of things! (chuckle)

Stephen: Adela Rogers St. Johns said that Mabel had no parents in her book, Adela wrote a book called *The Honeycomb* and in the book she wrote, Mabel had no family and all this business, and Mabel was addicted to dope, but

this picture, the reason I had it put on the cover (of Aug-Sept 1974 *Films in Review*) is to show that Mabel DID have her family and she did LOVE her family, and she DID have a mother, and --

Don: It's BEAUTIFUL.

Minta: Yes. (He showed us a framed portrait, sepia, about 19" high.)

Stephen: I had more, but I just brought the most important ones.

Minta: You see, Adela Rogers St. Johns, I'm surprised that she --

Stephen: Well, she worked for the Hearst newspapers. That's our answer right there.

Minta: That IS her answer. That is absolutely her answer. (He showed a framed color picture, either original oil, or an oil tinted photo, in pastels, with some light blue, perhaps the dress -- We'd "oh'd" in unison) Well THIS is, this is the GORGEOUS picture of her.

Don: That's the one that's on the music I have. Or a pose like that, anyway.

Stephen: They call that the 'mystery' photograph, because that's the one that Mabel had painted for Mack Sennett and gave it to him for his engagement present or wedding present, but Mabel took it back from him.

Minta: Isn't that BEAUTIFUL!

Don: Oh, it IS!

Minta: Oh, she was so beautiful! So beautiful. And do you know, she was so cute, she would kind of cuddle up a little to you, you know what I mean, in her little ways of expression, and she was a great tease, a little imp, a minx, I guess that is the better word.

Well, Adela Rogers St. Johns is supposed to have always liked Mabel so much. Well, believe me, my dear Stephen, everybody in the world that knows Minta Durfee Arbuckle has heard just all the beautiful things that there is to be said about Mabel.

Stephen: Miss Benson has said the same. When she speaks of her, she speaks only in the highest; there aren't many people who speak of Mabel the way YOU speak of her, that's for sure; that's the shame of it all.

Minta: The moment that they start, if her name comes right up, I start running off at the mouth, dear, and I'd just never shut up 'til I've had all my say, and they just stand and look at me, and I say, "I KNOW, what I'm talking about, I KNOW." And this is true. And every word in my (book.)

Stephen: I have them in albums; it's easier that way.

Minta: I wish somebody would fix MY albums of pictures, all those pictures, imagine! -- She and Roscoe would SWIM and DIVE and (for) hours upon end, they just loved to play in the water. Did you ever see that "Fatty and Mabel Adrift?"

Stephen: No. No. I haven't seen, THAT one; I HAVE seen a closeup, but not the whole thing.

Minta: Well, you HAVE to see it. Because this one -- I'm going to try to BUY it.

Don: I've seen that several times, and THAT IS a classic.

Minta: And isn't that sweet where he leans over in shadow to kiss her, even after all the water, and the house floating out to sea and everything. It's wonderful.

I never saw TWO PEOPLE who were so well adapted, to work together. Never in the history of my life. -- That's sweet; that looks like mother Davenport there.

I cried copious tears over her, dear, in my lifetime. When people say unkind things about her, I have to fight to (maintain control of myself.)

One day I was working on a set out at Fox, and someone said to me, they said something about Mabel Normand, and this man looked up, and said, "You better look out!" And so this person came over and said to me, "You better look out." And I said, "What are you talking about?" "Mabel Normand." So I said, "Sit right down, now, and I'll give you a whole run-down on the whole subject, and when I get thru with it, for the rest of your lives, you tell people what I've told you." I could go on tour and do it. I nearly DIED at the show ("Mack and Mabel").

That's a nice picture of YOU.

Stephen: Thank you.

Minta: Very nice. That's very, very, very nice. Well, you can be proud of her, dear. -- Oh, YES, THAT'S our GIRL! (chuckle) You know, she didn't have any vanity; I used to LOVE this expression, people would tell her how BEAUTIFUL she was, and she'd look up with those beautiful eyes and say, "Well, I didn't have anything to do with it, but if I ever amount to anything, I'll take a little credit."

Don: (chuckle) Which is so TRUE! -- There's a quote in here from Buddy Rogers. It says, "Adorable!" -- We know Buddy.

Minta: I used to have a picture like that of Mabel, and I never will forget this outfit she wore; we went down to Sunset Inn, and the whole thing was too much for a little girl, a little beautiful thing. This was all those Egret's (feathers) that cost so much money, and they'd been given to her, so she had this turban made. And this dress was like gold lame, and it was kind of SEXY. and she stepped out of the car, and she looked like a little girl made up in her mother's dress, you know, because she was so childish (childlike.) Not mentally. I'm talking about (her appearance), the size of her.

She had a house on Camden Drive (526 North Camden Drive, in Beverly Hills). I can't see this very well, who is this man?

Stephen: That's Jack White. George White's brother. That's at Mabel's house.

Minta: Yes. Yes. I know the house on Camden Drive, also. But the one, of course I was living in New York City, we were separated my husband and I were the CLOSEST FRIENDS that you'll ever know of in the world. He spent hundreds of dollars on telephones, called all the time, because we didn't quarrel about 'a man and woman', any kind of love affair, anything of that kind. It was all done after he was sick, they worked on him. -- Isn't she sweet there? -- He was a doll.

Don: Minta? This picture is on the cover of a magazine that I have. (Mack Sennett) Back in 1916 or so. It's a famous portrait that they have around. I knew it was black and white originally, and tinted in two tones.

Minta: I liked Mack Sennett very well...

Don: Oh, there he is, smiling.

Minta: That's why this story on the stage is so wrong. He was anything else BUT a dictator. You're going to direct, see, and we're wrong here. This is the way we made our stories up, by sitting here and talking about them, and if there's a gag, he might say to you, "Now, listen Steve, I think that gag would be better for Minta than it would be for him," or so forth. And then when we'd get started, he'd come out and kind of watch. And he might say, "Well, you could probably use a few more people there, or a few less people here." One of the nicest human beings in the world.

Don: She's buried in Calvary Mausoleum in Los Angeles...

Minta: Oh, yes. There she is. Look at those eyes! I'll probably cry myself sick after this is all over.

Stephen: Awh, now, we don't want to get you upset, now.

Minta: I used to have one of these. I love this one.

Don: Isn't that precious?

Minta: This is one of her first pretty gowns, PRETTY gowns that she ever wore, because she was always wearing just nothing to work in.

Don: Holding the skirt up with both hands.

Minta: Oh, she's so beautiful. So sweet.

Don: She was a model, when she was so YOUNG, here.

Minta: She was modeling at ten years.

Stephen: That's right.

Minta: With this Neysa McMein.

Don: It looks like velvet, fur, and a few roses in the front.

Stephen: When she modeled, she wished she could keep the costumes for herself.

Don: Yeah.

Minta: (chuckle) Here's a cute expression that she used to have. I would like to have one of these pictures of Mack Sennett, myself. Sennett had beautiful eyes.

Stephen: Yes, he did.

Minta: And he had a BEAUTIFUL voice, oh God! ...I'll show you a cameo that my husband had made of me. I think Roscoe thought HE was going to wear it. It's so large. (About 5" high, oval, carmel color, with white

figure, head and shoulders, profile. Eyelashes are notable.) But it's been photographed and talked about, and written about. (long pause while she went to other room, while we looked at pics) I believe it was taken from the picture that's in the hall, there. And I didn't know the picture was gone. I have a (hand painted one?) someplace. Now if you turn it, you can see all the eyelashes and everything. He paid a big price for it. I didn't know he had it done. As I say, I think the poor darling thought HE was going to wear it. Turn it THIS way and look at it, see the eyelashes.

Don: Ohh, look at that.

Minta: You've seen this, haven't you, Don.

Don: Nope.

Minta: I wore it in a picture, one time, with a gorgeous gown, velvet gown Orry Kelly made for me. I had more letters come from it, says [saying?] "We see that [what?] you're wearing yourself." [sic] I wear that in "Mickey" I think!

Don: How were these made, Minta, carved or what?

Minta: It was carved by a man who came from Europe. Roscoe paid \$900 to have made. By a special man that came to this country. He came to one of our big jewelers, and the jeweler got in touch with everybody and said, "if you have something unusual that you would like to have done," well, at that time, I had a beautiful five carot stone and I had a bracelet, a diamond bracelet, and so this is what Roscoe got, and I never knew that the picture left the house. Then after I came back after being gone all these years, I wore was red, and Alice Faye said to me, "My God! That's so beautiful!" I was working with her, see I was gone so many years that -- there's a LOT of SCANDAL that I'm glad I don't know anything about. Because it's bad enough to know what we DO know. And anyone in show business, if everybody on this street would run out, and I would run out, and fall down they'd write me up, they wouldn't write the lady up next door, and down here in the next block. SO you HAVE to LEARN. Don: You have to think a little bit before you do something, how it's going to LOOK.

Stephen: Right. Because they're watching everything.

Don: Yes. Where they wouldn't pay any attention to somebody else. -- Ohhh! I don't have to say it, YOU know THAT, those pictures are MAGNIFICENT!

Stephen: That's my grandfather, but she had him with a camera; he's in the center.

Don: Just posing, as a cameraman? Or he really was?

Stephen: Yes. Mabel got him a job out here.

Don: Oh, good...

Minta: (Came back with an oval picture, torn, of Roscoe, about 6" high, in a cap, waist up). Here is exactly how Roscoe looked the first day I ever saw him on the Red Streetcar (meant Big Red Car) going down to Long Beach. He had a brown cap, brown suit, and a bow tie.

He wanted to carry my suitcase and I said, "Please, do not TOUCH my suitcase. Because I don't like blondes, or fat men." And in five months, I was married to him. He was just a boy, you know. (long pause) Well, you have a lovely collection there.

Stephen: Thank you.

Minta: You never did tell me, I thought you worked in a banking concern.

Stephen: I DO work in a bank, part time. Because I have to have SOME money coming in. But I work in the office for a savings bank on Staten Island. It's more convenient there, it's closer to my home, and the hours commuting and all that, it's much easier to work nearby. So sometimes I'm at the window, at other times I'm at the desk, with people selling traveler's checks and things like that. Sometimes I'm a bank teller, all around, depends on what they want to do on those days when I come in, if somebody is out sick or a lot of customers, whatever.

It's taken me a long time - you see, I have to do all this, as you know when you're writing a book, I'm doing Mabel's biography, and it takes a long time also. A lot of work, typing, re- typing.

Minta: Well, if there's ever anything I can tell you about, in writing her biography, put it in. And you can say that I have told you, so it won't be hearsay. It won't be something conjured up in your mind.

Stephen: Thank you very much. Always a direct quote, never any other way.

Don: This house, isn't that SOMETHING! On Staten Island, the turret and everything.

Stephen: She had it built for her.

Don: Oh, she had it built!

Stephen: It was a French house. A French chateau. They were French, the family was French. (long pause, we moved to the dining room, so Minta could sit at the table and look at the stills). You know, we have more things at home, (lost words), oil paintings, and possessions which were hers, and (lost words) and of course the pictures.

Don: I'm crazy about ANYTHING about movies. Not current, but back. (long pause)

Stephen: She used to quote a lot of French; this is her French teacher.

Don: There's Samuel Goldwyn there. (long pause) (THIS is where Minta walked to the dining room, saw the tape recorder and said, "Oh-ho-ho, if her thinks I'm going to do some taping today, he's foolish.") That miniature portrait is ABSOLUTELY MARVELOUS.

Minta: Absolutely Exquisite. Well, I think that picture of her, that large one you have there, is also in the book of Mack Sennett's. I think THAT is one of the most beautiful pictures I ever saw of anybody. ANYBODY.

Stephen: Yes, I DO love that myself, it's remarkable.

Minta: Do you have a studio in the EAST?

Stephen: Oh, no! I just work from my home in New York, yes. It's a nice section.

Minta: I went over there one time with her. On a little ferry. Just think how many years ago that is!

Stephen: I know.

Don: (reading note) She slipped gears on a Stutz Bearcat.

Stephen: Mack Sennett gave it to her. I recall seeing you in a -- I have a collection of her films which I brought, 8mm, you're in this film, dancing, let's see now, how does it go? It's Charlie Chaplin, Mabel and you, and he is a waiter and he poses himself off as a Prime Minister of Greenland, and Mabel was a wealthy girl and all this business and she invites him to her home and you're in the restaurant dancing with someone. And there's an orchestra playing. I can see you -- it's just unbelievable and THAT'S how many years ago? To think -- and all your films are still seen today. You should publicize yourself more. I think you should get out and make known that you're around and you should give a vocal opinion of things that are going on, I think you're WRONG in staying quiet. I think you should come out and let people know what you have to say.

Minta: Well, you see, what I HAVE been doing, I have a manager up in San Jose, and I have these pictures that I SHOW, then I tell the vignettes about it, I have questions and answers, and San Francisco, I have to tell this to you, I've never seen such a rainstorm since God made rain. And of course I wear beautiful evening clothes, I mean I always dress for everything that I do like that. And when we were riding up from San Jose, maybe an hour's ride, I thought to myself, there won't be a SOUL in the theater. It's a very famous old theater, it holds 1,000 people. I had 900 people in a driving rain that I wouldn't have put my FOOT out-side. I mean, as far as I'm concerned, had I been a person that was going to be a patron. Well, when I got thru, I had a standing ovation. He made a tape recording of it, and I stood up there, and they would ask me about my husband's trial. And I had the answer for them if they HAD. So he said to this manager, "Don't worry about Mrs. Arbuckle, she's very articulate. And she will answer." But they didn't. I told them and I told them and I ranted and I raved around about Mabel Normand, and I had over a hundred pictures of Mabel, and more Mabel, and all this business. I told them a great many of the very things that I have told you today. And instead of those people having brains enough to go home, in the rain, and go home, they were WAITING in the LOBBY when I get thru, and my pictures, I autographed I think a hundred pictures, half of them were Roscoe, I have a very cute picture of Roscoe, with all of his little things around him, and I'm up in the corner. And they STILL wanted to know more about Mabel Normand. So I said, the manager said, this is just what he said to me, "We don't care HOW long we keep the place open, because I live upstairs." That's what I do. Then I went to the colleges. On my 82nd birthday, I did all the colleges on the Northern part, from San Jose up. Carry right on, with Mabel Normand. Because we had pictures up there, you know. And I go right into it.

Stephen: I appreciate that.

Minta: It's TRUE. Everybody that KNOWS me, dear, knows that THIS and my husband are very touchy subjects with ME. Because BOTH of them have been so absolutely MISTREATED by the press. Which makes me like I am. I don't hate anybody in the world, but I mean, when I get a chance, to open my big mouth, I do it.

Stephen: That's good. You should do that. It's not a big mouth, it's very fortunate that you're able to get up and talk and say it because a lot of people just don't have that way. They DO keep silent.

Minta: See, what I've got to do, I've got a plan to have a regular, get all my pictures back to me, and then I'm going to try to purchase some pictures. And I'm going to build for clubs, and gatherings, where I can go out and I can tell the stories. I'll have to do it partly for my living, because I'm living on a very small budget, and all that kind of thing, but that's what I'm going to do. And that's what I LOVE to do.

Don: She's very good at it.

Minta: You see, I love an AUDIENCE. I'm still a stage girl.

Stephen: Never lose that. I have a problem (with spelling) I write British, and I also write American. Sometimes you'll see a word spelled the British way.

Minta: Do you think you'll come out here to live?

Stephen: I HOPE I DO come back, yes. ...

Minta: Isn't Julie (Julia Benson) sweet?

Both: Oh, yes.

Minta: I just love her. ...

Stephen: Well, I came out at their invitation to SEE the play, ...which I DID see, and they told me that there was going to be some things I wouldn't like, they didn't say exactly what it would be. They didn't exactly say clearly what the problems were going to be. I knew there was dope in it, but I didn't know how it was going to be presented, they didn't say HOW it was going to be done. But they told me there'd be changes. I have correspondence with them, telling me this will be all ironed out by the time it gets to New York, well I have an attorney that informed them that we have the medical evidence now, and that things will be pressed, there will be a case against them if they don't change it, so when I saw the play as soon as I got back, I spoke to my attorney on the telephone and told him what I saw. So they got in touch with the Merrick office, and they claim that they're going to make changes, before it hits New York. They're re-writing the script now. It was just in St. Louis, it will be in Washington for almost a month, it starts there on Monday, it opens there. Then it hits New York. They invited me to the premiere in New York, so I guess by inviting me to the premiere, I'm sure they're going to have changes. They wouldn't want me to go thru this thing again, I suppose. That's on the 6th of October.

Minta: Well, I wish they'd take out the bad language that they have for Mr. Sennett, in all due respect to Sennett, because the thing's about the Keystone (sic.) anyway, with Mabel and him, and that guy that runs in there at the last and says something about, "Well, what do you expect, she was a heroin addict."

Stephen: I know. Also they make it look like Mack and Mabel were living together, and they make some snide remarks about Mabel's parents --

Minta: And yet there is NO ROMANCE in the darn thing.

Stephen: I didn't see any. ...Dick Jones, he was her favorite director.

Minta: Well, I hope you can do SOMETHING about it, because it is just terrible.

Don: How far along ARE you on writing the book? Just starting research or --

Stephen: It's, I have one in here that (didn't answer at this point)...one with Mabel and Fatty together. The marquis. -- I have the publisher already. As a matter of fact, the publisher himself is very interested in that.

Minta: I'm going to get up at the table. Who is your publisher?

Stephen: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. They're in New York...that's Sydney [sic] Sutherland, he did the biography of Mabel. I have, but didn't bring it, a picture, "The Marquis" with Mabel and Fatty. I wish I had brought it....So I'll have a copy made and send it out to you....because the publishing company does the copies for me.

Minta: We had a baseball -- out here, and she was the head of the baseball business (team?) ...This was one of her favorite pictures of herself...Minnie. I have a picture of Roscoe and Minnie Hee Haw, it's one of the funniest ones I've ever seen; she falls in love with Roscoe, and SHE LOVED MABEL. And she used to make Mabel little slippers to wear. She loved Mabel, then she loved Roscoe, and I came third. But she ADORED Mabel. She was a Cherokee Indian and her name was Minnie Devereaux (sic) She was a very well-educated Indian woman. I could tell all kinds of funny things about her, too...(to a pic of Sennett) You're a sweetheart, even if you DID chew tobacco. ...Who is the man?

Stephen: His name is Arden. He was a writer. (pause)...

Don: (pic inside a stage) was that at Goldwyn? Or --

Minta: This was never us.

Don: Sennett never had a stage. No.

Minta: We never had stages! And stuff like that there. (pause) I was there four years. EVERY DAY, work.

Don: Came off the trolley.

Minta: Pigeon-toed. That race track thing in "Mickey" is good, isn't it! I have a copy of that. I'll have it sent down and we'll have it run. ...

Stephen: they sure ought to do that. Why don't they bring them down?

Don: Bill Thrush is ill, that's the problem.

Minta: We only use them when I'm doing a picture, a show, see I've done so many shows, that I went up this last time to do four shows and he was ill and I only did TWO shows. I showed pictures, and told all about them.

Don: She can do that, down here.

Minta: I can do it anyplace

Don: Anyplace.

Minta: That's what I was set for, --

Don: If we had the films in our hands.

Minta: You see, I was sent for, when I was doing "Molly Brown," by the British Film Institute of Silent Films sent for me, because every so often they want somebody who is still living, of the films they have. I had two more weeks under contract with Debbie, and she said, "Oh, Minta, for the love of beans, go on and go, because" "But you had three beautiful gowns made for me for the Denver set." "I know, but any gal who can go thru what YOU have, the trial, you've never cry-babied about anything, lose a million dollars and never say a word about it. I'm for YOU a thousand percent. Go on and go." So I went on over and in exactly the ending of 1963 and we stayed over into 1964, and I was supposed to do all of the monetary basis, but Mr. Kennedy had been assassinated, and all of our American places were closed down, you know. But I was in Paris, stayed there for a week, and I was 3 weeks in London, and around London. Yep. Quite an experience.-- I loved that scene where she's up in the tree (Mabel in "Mickey") wasn't she sweet in that thing? (pause)

Stephen: This man was the mayor of Chicago.

Minta: You know, we went back in 1915, Sennett wanted us to go back, Mabel and Roscoe and our cameraman and that sort of thing, because Mabel wanted to see her people. And Roscoe had gotten this release, so he gave that to us as a gift, you might say, a compliment, and we'd get out at these railroad stops, and we were so unconscious of the fact how POPULAR we were, people would be jamming the railroads. -- Now what is this, a birthday?

Don and Stephen: That's a scene in one of her movies.

Minta: I remember when she left us -- WHEW! ...

Stephen: This is the fellow who did the story with her, Sydney Sutherland? With *Liberty* magazine? That was towards the end.

Minta: Can I ask you a question? I had a man who was going to do a story and he called me one night at ten-thirty at night, and he said, "I want to find out, this man Sutherland, says, that Mabel was a dope fiend. I said, "I haven't heard anything like that before in my life." He didn't print it anyway, in his story, so maybe he said it personally, but never said it publicly. That I know of, anyway. ...

Stephen: It was a nice story, really; I'll have to get a xerox of that, too, and send it to you.

Minta: Now you're going too. Where all do you have to go from here, now?

Stephen: I'm going out to dinner, I'm supposed to stop at Julia's, ...

Minta: You don't leave until --

Stephen: Saturday.

Minta: That's pretty good.

Stephen: Maybe I'll give you a call before I go, just to say goodbye, is that all right?

Minta: I'd just LOVE it. And don't forget those pictures you want to send to me, I'll be grateful for them.

Stephen: All right, I will. I'll have copies made. You'd like to have the copies sent?

Minta: Yes.



Stephen: You want Mack Sennett; you want one of Mabel, by herself, and there's another one I have, I don't have it with me here, two of them I'd like you to see, there's one, -- I didn't bring them all with me, you can realize they're pretty valuable, for traveling around. And my publisher's very fussy, too. About copies and things like that. But for you, it doesn't make any difference, but I wouldn't give pictures to just anybody, see, as you know, when pictures are copied, it makes the rarity of them go down. Much less.

Minta: Yes. This Stuart Oderman that I know in New York City, rather he lives in East Orange, but I mean he plays for these museums and all, and he's so nuts about this stuff, he buys only, he pays any price, he bought a new picture of Mabel that he found out here. I don't know, I think he paid \$25. for it. And things of that kind. And when you get back home, and get in touch with me, I'd like to have you get in touch with HIM. Because he likes to say (see?) things that you do, and --

Stephen: You mentioned someone else before that saw the play with you. Who saw the play with you? Julia was telling me about another fellow that was out here.

Minta: That's Stuart Oderman. he is a teacher; his whole life is music and nostalgia and the theaters. And he has a friend by the name of Mr. Lee that was with WOR, and this man has such a collection, as you've never seen in your lifetime, and when he retired from WOR he took to his great garage and made a theater in it, and people come from all over.

Stephen: I was telling Don, if he gets to the East coast, stop by and say hello. (End of Tape REEL 6A)

## APPENDIX F

### Interview with Anita Garvin

At the age of 87, Anita Garvin, one of the great, albeit unsung, slapstick queens of films passed away in July 1994 at the Motion Picture Country House and Hospital in Woodland Hills, CA. In her last years Anita was very frail. Nevertheless, I was able to obtain the following interview from her in the course of my earlier research on Mabel Normand. Anita began her career on the stage as a young girl, appearing in the Ziegfeld Follies. One of her earliest recollections was of how Will Rogers allowed her, of all the Ziegfeld girls, to hold his rope. After some years working and touring with vaudeville, she went into films where she first got a job with Al Christie. Later, she went to work for Hal Roach and appeared in films with, among others, Mabel Normand, Zasu Pitts, Charley Chase and Thelma Todd. It is her work, however, with Laurel and Hardy in some of their silent films, like *From Soup to Nuts* and *Battle of the Century*, however, for which Anita will probably be best remembered. In the late thirties, Anita later quit films to settle down and have a family when she married band leader Red Stanley. The marriage lasted happily 49 years, up until his death, and "Mrs. Stanley" always maintained great loyalty, love and affection for him. As all who knew her can attest, Anita was one of the most sweet, funny and warm people you could possibly know. Although she is greatly missed, she will not be forgotten.

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WTS: You appeared with Mabel Normand in a three reeler, *Raggedy Rose*, at the Roach studios. What are your very earliest recollections of her?

AG: I think I just loved her. When I was a kid I adored her, I worshipped her. But after I met and worked with her she was just a normal person!

WTS: That's how it always seems to turn out, doesn't it?

AG: (laughing) Yes.

WTS: How did she compare in popularity with someone like Mary Pickford?

AG: Oh she was a big star. They were close as being the same as far as (fans') admiration and love for her. She was married to Lew Cody, and he was an angel. He would always be standing by on the set for her. She was losing her mind about that time - or having some kind of problems, and he was absolutely wonderful!

WTS: He was some ladies man wasn't he?

AG: Oh yes, the women loved him!

WTS: What was it like playing with Mabel in *Raggedy Rose*?

AG: Mabel was hard to work with. She would move her way - which would confuse you if you were working with her. She kept you jumping, you didn't know what to expect. One thing I remember which she didn't do perfect was that she couldn't find her spot. She would get a little wild and not stay within camera range where she was supposed to be, if you know what I mean. But you must realize that this happened in her later days. She was trying to make a come back at that time (1926), but it didn't work out.

WTS: What do you remember about Charley Chase?

AG: What I recall is that he always wanted me to wear a blonde wig. But my hair was jet black then, now it's pure white. At that time he liked blondes for some reason or another so I wore a blonde wig. He was a real nice guy.

WTS: I noticed that you wore the blonde wig in *Raggedy Rose*?

AG: That because she (Mabel) was dark - like opposites.

WTS: Her hair was black wasn't it?

AG: Maybe it was dark brown, but I thought it was black.

WTS: About that time, (1926) did you ever hear comments, said behind her back, to the effect that she was all washed up?

AG: Yes, but I never listened to that. I liked her, she was nice. But I only worked with her on the one picture, so you see it's hard to remember very much. It's so long ago.

WTS: It was *Battle of the Century* where you fall on the pie.

AG. They (television) ruined the cutting of that one. You know they had to fit it into a TV version. Originally as I slipped and fell on the pie I get up and walked back the way I came. They had an insert of a damp spot just in the shape of the pie and it wasn't funny. They just ruined it.

WTS. Laurel and Hardy loved music, didn't they? Did you get to see that side of them?

AG. Oh yes. Babe had a beautiful singing voice.

WTS. Did you only see them on the set, or what was your relationship?

AG. I knew Stan and his wife and the baby. I say "baby" but she's an old woman now like me. I knew them socially they were nice people.

WTS. I know you worked with Al St. John, who, along with and in the company of Keaton, Arbuckle and Cody, was an accomplished practical jokester off the set. Was Laurel ever like that?

AG. No. Stan was the type that concentrated on the picture at all times; thinking of funny things to happen.

WTS. Did they (L & H) ever have disagreements among themselves?

AG. No never, absolutely never. I swore that after what they wrote about Thelma Todd, you know "Hot Toddy," I swore after I was interviewed on the thing I would never do this again: because they screwed the whole thing up! They were absolutely out of their minds. There wasn't anything in that book that was worth five minutes of her time. What they did to Thelma Todd! "Hot Toddy" they liked the title, but I could see through whoever wrote it. (groans) Oh God!

WTS. That was Andy Edmonds.

AG. I know Andy Edmonds. But I knew Thelma very well, and she was straight laced. She never went through all these things. And she (Edmonds) even got my husband and I - had our business and things - she got that all wrong. It was at the old Monmart on Hollywood Blvd. near Highland. She had us on out on the strip someplace before there was a strip. She got everything backwards. And she interviewed me and I gave her the straight scoop on Thelma. But I think she just decided she knew because she probably liked the title "Hot Toddy" and thought she was going to make it "Hot Toddy!"

WTS. In the pictures, you are rarely smiling. You seem like you are scheming with that wry, dead-pan expression of yours.

AG. I never over-acted in other words.

WTS. There always seems to be something going on behind your eyes like you knew what you wanted, and were going to have it. Where did that character come from?

AG. It was me, just me. A lot of these things I could be doing something and I said this is isn't funny so I put a little something into it; trying to make it funny. You know, I did mostly comedy or wicked women. [(laughing) Yea, I know what you mean.] There is a caricature here in my room that Nancy Bourbon [Nancy Beiman] did and she caught that in the sketch that she made. I thought "how did she get the expression there?" But she did!

WTS. You really were an incredible doll and a lot more attractive and talented than movie history on the surface has seemed to have given you credit.

AG. Well, I think that was because of my kids. I quit the business just when I had a seven year contract on the Fox lot of Winnie Sheehan's desk waiting to be signed and I wouldn't.

WTS. You'd married (band leader) Red Stanley then? (1930)

AG. Yes, fifty beautiful years of the most wonderful guy in the world!

WTS. What was his music like?

AG. Oh, his music was nothing compared to his dancing. He introduced the "Charleston" in Paris. He was wonderful. A marvellous dancer!

WTS. I can see why he was dancing.

AG. He was darling .

WTS. And you're a great-grandmother?

AG. Yea.

WTS. Seems like things turned out all right for you.

AG. I don't know about that. I can't walk. I can't write.

WTS. O.K., but how old are you?

AG. Eighty-six!

WTS. Well that's pretty old, for pete's sake.

AG. You're darn tootin!

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Revue no. 8: "A Busy Day," "The Fatal Mallet"
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Revue no. 10: "Mabel's Busy Day," "Mabel's Married Life"
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This filmography has been years in the making and has been compiled from various and diverse sources, all of which have been checked against each other for accuracy. Some of the primary sources, other than viewings of the original films themselves, have included the following:

The Great Movie Comedians by Leonard Maltin

D. W. Griffith and the Biograph Company by Cooper C. Graham, et. al.

Kops and Custards by Kalton Lahue

Mack Sennett: The Man, The Myth and the Comedies by Kalton Lahue

Films from the Library of Congress Paper Print Collection by Kemp Niver

Mack Sennett's Fun Factory (2013) by Brent E. Walker

"The Films of Mabel Normand," by Betty Fussell in *Film History*, Nov-Dec. 1988, Vol. 2, no. 4

Scripts for Mabel's Goldwyn films contained in the MGM Archives of the University of Southern California's Film Library, Special Collections

Biograph production records contained in The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Margaret Herrick Library, Special Collections

In recording the data on the films Mabel made with Arbuckle I have when in doubt referred to Sam Gill's Arbuckle filmography found in David Yallop's *The Day The Laughter Stopped* and Andy Edmond's *Frame-Up!: The Untold Story of Fatty Arbuckle*. However, it should be noted that Kalton Lahue, in *Kops and Custards*, makes the comment that "Charles Avery is known to have directed thirty-one of the early Arbuckle Keystone," a fact which, if true, is at odds with Sam's listing.²⁶⁸

With regard to Mabel's feature films, an effort has been made to identify which actor played which part. Yet as there are some gaps in the record, particularly with respect to some of the Goldwyn films, this has not always been possible. Fortunately, however, those feature films which do not list who played which part are the exception and not the rule.

Film with asterisks (*) indicate films known to still be in existence. The following are the codes for identifying their location. Films marked with asterisk without source location given are known to be in the possession of private collectors.

Archive code:

LC ¾ Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; MOMA ¾ Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; BFI ¾ British Film Institute, London; EG ¾ Em Gee Film Library, Los Angeles, CA; Blackhawk ¾ Blackhawk Films Collection; Killiam ¾ Killiam Films

OVER THE GARDEN WALL

Vitagraph

973 ft., released: June 10, 1910

cast: Maurice Costello, Florence Turner, Mabel Normand, Willie Marks, Kenneth Casey, Adele DeGarde

TWO OVERCOATS

Vitagraph

rel: June 24, 1911

Dir. George Baker

John Bunny, Flora Finch, William Shea, Kate Price, Mabel Normand (?)

WILFUL PEGGY*

Biograph

957 ft., rel: August 29, 1910

Dir. D.W. Griffith

cast: Mary Pickford, Henry Walthall, Claire McDowell, Kate Bruce, Verner Clarges, Robert Harron, Mabel Normand (extra)

BETTY BECOMES A MAID *

Vitagraph

length: 957 ft., rel: Mar. 14, 1911

cast: Mabel Normand, James Morrison,

Leo Delaney

* BFI

TROUBLESOME SECRETARIES *

Vitagraph

1 reel, rel: Apr. 21, 1911

Dir.: Ralph Ince

cast: John Bunny, Mabel Normand, Ralph Ince, James Morrison, Alec B. Francis

* Blackhawk, about a split reel survives of this film.

PICCIOLA

Vitagraph

1/2 reel, rel: Apr. 29, 1911

cast: Mabel Normand

WHEN A MAN'S MARRIED HIS TROUBLE BEGINS

Vitagraph

1/2 reel, rel: May 6, 1911

Cast: James Morrison, Edward Philby, Mabel Normand?

HIS MOTHER

Vitagraph

²⁶⁸ "Avery, Charles; b. Chicago 1873; educ. Boston: stage career, covering 12 yrs., supporting W. H. Crane, William Faversham, starred in 'Charlie's Aunt,' original company 'The Clansman'; screen career, member of original Biograph, with original Bison, with Keystone since its organization in Cal.; dir. Arbuckle 31 pictures, played in cast 19 pictures with Charles Murray, all 'Hogan' series, 'Submarine Pirate,' 'The Last Scent,' an others with Sid [sic] Chaplin, dir. Ford Sterling, L-KO Comedies. Hght., 5, 4 1/2; dark complexion, gray hair, eyes. Ad., home, 2023 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, cal.; Wil. 6099." --- from "Motion Picture Studio Directory and Trade Annual 1920." The mustached Avery, by the way, was a quite funny film comedian as evinced in "Mabel's New Hero" (1913) and "A Muddy Romance" (1913.)

1/2 reel, rel: May 9, 1911
cast: Mary Maurice, Maurice Costello,
Mabel Normand

A DEAD MAN'S HONOR *

Vitagraph
1000 ft., rel: May 23, 1911
cast: Maurice Costello, Mabel Normand,
Julia Swayne Gordon
* BFI

**THE CHANGING OF SILAS
WARNER**

Vitagraph
1000 ft., rel: June 10, 1911
cast: Maurice Costello, Mabel Normand

THE SUBDUING OF MRS. NAG *?

Vitagraph
1000 ft., rel: July 14, 1911
director: Geo. D. Baker, author: Van Dyke
Brooks
cast: John Bunny, Flora Finch, Mabel
Normand, James Morrison, Mrs. B. F.
Clinton
* Possibly David Shepard.

THE DIVING GIRL *

Biograph
502 ft., rel: Aug. 21, 1911
dir. Frank Powell, camera: Percy
Higginson
cast: Fred Mace, Mabel Normand, Wm. J.
Butler, Verner Clarges, Robert Harron,
Donald Crisp, Eddie Dillon, Florence Lee,
Guy Hedlund, Joseph Graybill, W. C.
Robinson, J. Waltham
filmed: 7/5-8/1911
Location: Huntington, Long Island, NY
copyright: Aug. 23, 1911
* LC; MOMA

HOW BETTY WON THE SCHOOL

Vitagraph
1/2 reel, rel: Aug. 22, 1911
cast: Mabel Normand?

THE BARON *

Biograph
619 ft., rel: Aug. 31, 1911
dir. Mack Sennett, auth: Edwin August,
cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Dell Henderson, Grace Henderson,
Mabel Normand, Joseph Graybill, Fred
Mace, Kate Bruce, Alfred Paget, Wm. J.
Butler, Kate Toncray
filmed: 7/24-28/1911
Location: Ft. Lee, NJ
copyright: Sept. 5, 1911

THE SQUAW'S LOVE *

Biograph
998 ft., rel: Sept. 14, 1911
dir. D. W. Griffith, auth. Stanner E. V.
Taylor,
cam. G. W. Bitzer, Percy Higginson, John
Mahr
cast: Mabel Normand, Dark Cloud,
Dorothy West, Alfred Paget, Claire
McDowell, Wm. J. Butler, Kate Bruce,
Donald Crisp

filmed: 8/1-3/1911
Location: Cuddleback-ville, NY
copyright: Sept. 18, 1911
* MOMA

HER AWAKENING *

Biograph
1050 ft., rel: Sept. 28, 1911
Biograph, dir. D. W. Griffith, cam. G. W.
Bitzer
cast: Mabel Normand, Kate Bruce, Harry
Hyde, Vivian Prescott?, Fred Mace?,
Robert Harron, Kate Toncray, Wm. J.
Butler, J. Jiquel Lanoe, Frank Evans,
Charles Hill Mailes, W. C. Robinson,
Donald Crisp, Edwin August?, Marion
Sunshine?
filmed: 8/21-22/1911
Location: Ft. Lee, NJ
copyright: Sept. 28, 1911
* Geo. Eastman House; MOMA; UCLA

THE MAKING OF A MAN *

Biograph
1000 ft., rel: Oct. 5, 1911
dir. D. W. Griffith, auth. R. L. Bond, cam.
G. W. Bitzer
cast: Dell Henderson, Blanche Sweet,
Wm. J. Butler, J. Jiquel Lanoe, Frank
Evans, Kate Toncray, Gladys Egan,
Charles Hill Mailes, W. Chrystie Miller,
Guy Hedlund, Eddie Dillon, Joseph
Graybill, Claire McDowell, Donald Crisp,
Frank Evans, W. C. Robinson, Charles
Hill Mailes, Vivian Prescott, Mabel
Normand, Harry Hyde, Wilfred Lucas,
Grace Henderson, J. Waltham
filmed: 8/14-17/1911
Location: Ft. Lee, NJ
copyright: Oct. 7, 1911
* Academy Film Archive (AMAAS); LC;
MOMA

THE UNVEILING *

Biograph
1035 ft., rel: Oct. 16, 1911
dir. D. W. Griffith, auth. T. P. Bayer, cam.
G. W. Bitzer
cast: Mabel Normand, Robert Harron,
Grace Henderson, Wm. J. Butler
filmed: 7/13, 8/26-28/1911
Location: New York studio
copyright: Oct. 17, 1911
* MOMA

THROUGH HIS WIFE'S PICTURE *

Biograph
530 ft., rel: Oct. 23, 1911
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Geo. Hennessy,
cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Fred Mace, Mabel Normand, Eddie
Dillon, Mack Sennett
filmed: 9/10-17/1911
Location: Ft. Lee-Westfield, NJ
copyright: Oct. 25, 1911
* MOMA

A VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCES *

Biograph
389 ft., rel: Nov. 4, 1911
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Mrs. Montayne
Perry, cam. Percy Higginson

cast: Fred Mace, Dell Henderson, Mabel Normand, Lily Cahill
filmed: 9/23-30, 10/2/1911
Location: Ft. Lee, NJ
copyright: Nov. 4, 1911
* MOMA

WHY HE GAVE UP *

Biograph
706 ft., rel: Dec. 4, 1911
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Elmer Booth,
cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Fred Mace, Mabel Normand, Eddie
Dillon, Wm. J. Butler?, W. C. Robinson,
J. Waltham, William Beaudine, Kathleen
Butler
filmed: 9/1, 9/8, 9/28/1911
Location: Huntington, NY
copyright: Dec 5, 1911
* MOMA

SAVED FROM HIMSELF *

Biograph
1037 ft., rel: Dec. 11, 1911
dir. D. W. Griffith, auth. Geo. Hennessy,
cam. G. W. Bitzer
cast: Joseph Graybill, Mabel Normand,
Charles Hill Mailes, Wm. J. Butler
filmed: 10/23-26/1911
Location: Englewood, NJ
copyright: Dec. 13, 1911
* MOMA

THE ETERNAL MOTHER *

Biograph
1044 ft., rel: Jan. 11, 1912
dir. & auth. D. W. Griffith, cam. G. W.
Bitzer
cast: Blanche Sweet, Mabel Normand,
Edwin August, Kate Bruce, Jiquel Lanoe,
Guy Hedlund, Donald Crisp, Jeannie
MacPherson, Charles Hill Mailes
filmed: 7/19, 7/22, 7/25, 8/11/1911
Location: Coytesville, NJ
copyright: Jan. 13, 1912
* LC; MOMA

THE MENDER OF NETS *

Biograph
959 ft., rel: Feb. 15, 1912
dir. D. W. Griffith, cam. G. W. Bitzer
cast: Mary Pickford, Mabel Normand,
Charles H. West, Marquerite Marsh
Loveridge
filmed: 1/1912
Location: Santa Monica, CA
copyright: Feb. 15, 1912
* BFI; Geo. Eastman House; LC; MOMA

THE FATAL CHOCOLATE *

Biograph
574 ft., rel: Feb. 19, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Edna Alexander,
cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Mabel Normand, Mack Sennett,
Charles H. West, Dell Henderson
filmed: 2/19/1912
Location: NY
copyright: Feb 20, 1912
* BFI; MOMA

THE ENGAGEMENT RING *

Biograph
497 ft., rel: Mar. 11, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Mabel Normand,
cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Mabel Normand, Eddie Dillon, Dell
Henderson, Kate Bruce, Fred Mace, J.
Jiquel Lanoe, Wm. J. Butler, Charles H.
West, Harry Hyde, William Beaudine
filmed: 1/1912
Location: CA
copyright: Mar. 11, 1912
* LC; MOMA

A SPANISH DILEMMA *

Biograph
1/2 reel, rel: Mar. 11, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Fred Mace, Mack Sennett, Mabel
Normand, Dell Henderson, W. C.
Robinson, J. Jiquel Lanoe
filmed: 1/1912
Location: CA
copyright: Mar. 11, 1912
* LC; MOMA

HOT STUFF *

Biograph
488 ft., rel: Mar. 21, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Dell Henderson,
cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand,
Dell Henderson, William Beaudine,
William J. Butler, Kate Bruce, Kate
Toncray, Harry Hyde, Fred Mace, Eddie
Dillon, Grace Henderson, Della Hall?
filmed: 1/1912
Location: CA
copyright: Mar. 21, 1912
* LC; MOMA

OH, THOSE EYES! *

Biograph
506 ft., rel: April 1, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Juanita Bennett,
cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Mabel Normand, Eddie Dillon, Dell
Henderson, J. Jiquel Lanoe, William J.
Butler, Frank Evans, Kate Toncray,
Edwin August, Harry Hyde, W. C.
Robinson, W. Christy Cabanne
filmed: 1/1912
Location: CA
copyright: Apr. 1, 1912
* LC; MOMA

HELP! HELP! *

Biograph
1/2 reel, rel: Apr. 11, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Eddie
Dillon, Dell Henderson, Alfred Paget, W.
C. Robinson, Frank Evans
filmed: 2/1912
Location: CA
copyright: Apr. 10, 1912
* LC; MOMA

THE BRAVE HUNTER *

Biograph
1/2 reel, rel: Apr. 22, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, cam. Percy Higginson

cast: Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand,
Dell Henderson, William J. Butler, Kate
Bruce, Charles Avery, J. Jiquel Lanoe
filmed: Jan-Feb 1912
Location: CA
copyright: Apr. 22, 1912
* LC; MOMA

THE FICKLE SPANIARD *

Biograph
456 ft., rel: May 2, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Dell Henderson,
cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Claire
McDowell, Wm. J. Butler, Eddie Dillon,
Dell Henderson, J. Jiquel Lanoe, Harry
Hyde, Kate Bruce, Kate Toncray, William
Beaudine
filmed: 2/1912
Location: CA
copyright: May 3, 1912
* LC; MOMA

THE FURS *

Biograph
1/2 reel, rel: May 13, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Mabel Normand, Dell Henderson,
Kate Bruce, Mack Sennett, Wm. J. Butler,
William Beaudine
filmed: 3/1912
Location: CA
copyright: May 13, 1912
* LC, MOMA

WHEN KINGS WERE THE LAW *

Biograph
1049 ft., rel: May 20, 1912
dir. D. W. Griffith, auth. Wilfred Lucas,
cam. G. W. Bitzer
cast: Wilfred Lucas, Harry Hyde,
Dorothy Bernard, J. Jiquel Lanoe, Claire
McDowell, Kate Toncray, W. Christy
Cabanne, Frank Opperman, Alfred Paget,
Charles Gorman, Frank Evans, Charles
Hill Mailes, William J. Butler, Kate
Bruce, Mabel Normand, Mae Marsh
filmed: 3/19
copyright: May 20, 1912
* MOMA

HELEN'S MARRIAGE *

Biograph
425 ft., rel: May 23, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Earl Hodge, cam.
Percy Higginson
cast: Mabel Normand, Eddie Dillon,
Frank Opperman, Grace Henderson, Fred
Mace, Dell Henderson, Wm. J. Butler,
Charles H. West, Frank Evans, J. Jiquel
Lanoe, Mack Sennett, William Beaudine
filmed: 3/1912
Location: CA
copyright: May 22, 1912
* LC; MOMA

TOMBOY BESSIE *

Biograph
521 ft., rel: June 3, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. William E. Wing,
cam. Percy Higginson

cast: Mabel Normand, Mack Sennett, Kate
Toncray, William J. Butler, W. C.
Robinson, Frank Opperman, Charles
Gorman?
filmed: 4/1912
Location: CA
copyright: June 8, 1912
* LC, MOMA

NEIGHBORS *

Biograph
363 ft., rel: June 13, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Dell Henderson,
cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Frank
Evans, William J. Butler, J. Jiquel Lanoe,
Frank Opperman, Kate Toncray, F: Sylvia
Ashton?
filmed: 4/1912
Location: CA
copyright: June 25, 1912
* LC, MOMA

KATCHEM KATE *

Biograph.
636 ft., rel: June 13, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Dell Henderson,
cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Jack
Pickford, Vivian Prescott, Tony
O'Sullivan
filmed: 4/1912
Location: CA
copyright: June 25, 1912
* LC, MOMA

A DASH THROUGH THE CLOUDS *

Biograph
742 ft., rel: June 24, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Dell Henderson,
cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Phillip
Parmalee, Kate Bruce, Grace Henderson,
Jack Pickford, Eddie Dillon, William J.
Butler, Harry Hyde, Charles Gorman, J.
Jiquel Lanoe, Alfred Paget, Sylvia Ashton
filmed: 4/1912
Location: CA
copyright: June 28, 1912
* Blackhawk; LC; MOMA

THE TOURISTS *

Biograph
1/2 reel, rel: Aug. 5, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace,
Charles H. West, William J. Butler, Grace
Henderson, Frank Evans, Kate Toncray,
Harry Hyde, Alfred Paget
filmed: late May - early June 1912
Location: ATS&F train station, Alvarado
Hotel, Harvey House and the Barelás
neighborhood near the train station (all)
in Albuquerque, NM
copyright: Aug. 7, 1912
* LC; MOMA

WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED *

Biograph
617 ft., rel: Aug. 5, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Dell Henderson,
cam. Percy Higginson

cast: Mack Sennett, Kate Toncray, Mabel Normand, Eddie Dillon, Jack Pickford, J. Jiquel Lanoe, William J. Butler
filmed: 4/1912
Location: Rubio Canyon, CA
copyright: Aug. 7, 1912
* LC

AN INTERRUPTED ELOPEMENT *

Biograph
477 ft., rel: Aug. 15, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. S. Walter Bunting, cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Eddie Dillon, Mabel Normand, William J. Butler, Elmer Booth, Ford Sterling, Charles Gorman
filmed: 6/1912
Location: NY-NJ area
copyright: Aug. 17, 1912
* LC, MOMA

THE TRAGEDY OF A DRESS SUIT *

Biograph
477 ft., rel: Aug. 15, 1912
dir. Sennett, auth. Mabel Normand, Eddie Dillon, Ford Sterling, W. Christy Cabanne, William J. Butler, Kate Bruce, Grace Henderson, Harry Hyde, Charles Avery, Frank Evans, William Beaudine
filmed: 6/1912
Location: NY-NJ area
copyright: Aug. 17, 1912
* LC, MOMA

MR. GROUCH AT THE SEASHORE

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Biograph
1/2 reel, rel: Aug. 26, 1912
dir. Dell Henderson, auth. Frank E. Woods, cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Eddie Dillon, Jack Pickford, J. Jiquel Lanoe, Florence Lee, William Beaudine, Charles Murray, Mabel Normand, Elsa McEvoy?
filmed: July 1912
Location: NY-NJ area
copyright: Oct. 11, 1912
* MOMA

HE MUST HAVE A WIFE *

Biograph
430 ft., rel: Sept. 5, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett?, auth. John A. Walsh, cam. Percy Higginson
cast: Gus Pixley, William J. Butler, Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Kathleen Butler
filmed: 6/1912
Location: NY-NJ area
copyright: Oct. 11, 1912
* LC; MOMA

COHEN COLLECTS A DEBT*

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Sept. 23, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand, Fred Mace
Location: N.Y.C.
* LC

THE WATER NYMPH *

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Sept. 23, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mabel Normand, Mack Sennett, Ford Sterling, Eddie Dillon
filmed: late Aug. - early Sept. 1912
Location: NY-NJ area
* EG; UCLA

THE NEW NEIGHBOR

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Sept. 30, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Fred Mace, Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand

PEDRO'S DILEMMA

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Oct. 7, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Fred Mace, Victoria Forde

STOLEN GLORY

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Oct. 14, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Fred Mace

THE AMBITIOUS BUTLER

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Oct. 21, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Fred Mace

FLIRTING HUSBAND

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Oct. 21, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling

AT CONEY ISLAND ^{*269}

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Oct. 28, 1912 (?)
dir. (probably) Mack Sennett
cast: Mabel Normand, Mack Sennett, Ford Sterling
* Nederland Film Museum, Amsterdam

MABEL'S LOVERS

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Nov. 4, 1912

²⁶⁹ We had previously listed this film as: "COHEN AT CONEY ISLAND Keystone-Mutual, 1/2 reel, rel: Oct. 28, 1912, dir. Mack Sennett, cast: Mabel Normand, Mack Sennett, Fred Mace," but have changed it after viewing the "At Coney Island" print housed in the Nederland Film Museum. This said, It *may* be the case that the two are entirely different films. The Oct. 28 released date is simply a conjectured guess based on the earlier "Cohen at Coney Island" entry.

dir. Mack Sennett cast: Mabel Normand,
Fred Mace, Ford Sterling, Alice
Davenport

AT IT AGAIN

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Nov. 4, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Fred Mace, Mack Sennett, Ford
Sterling, Mabel Normand

THE DEACON'S TROUBLE

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Nov. 11, 1912
dir. George Nichols
cast: Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Fred
Mace

A TEMPERMENTAL HUSBAND

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Nov. 11, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Fred
Mace

THE RIVALS *

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Nov. 18, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand,
Ford Sterling
* Geo. Eastman House; LC; MOMA

MR. FIX-IT

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Nov. 18, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand,
Ford Sterling, Fred Mace

A DESPERATE LOVER

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Nov. 25, 1912
dir. George Nichols
cast: Fred Mace, Mabel Normand

BROWN'S SEANCE

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Dec. 2, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Fred Mace, Mabel Normand, Alice
Davenport, Mack Sennett?

PAT'S DAY OFF

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Dec. 2, 1912
dir. ?
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Mack
Sennett, Ford Sterling, Alice Davenport

A FAMILY MIX-UP

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Dec. 9, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Fred Mace, Mabel
Normand

A MIDNIGHT ELOPEMENT

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Dec. 9, 1912
dir. George Nichols

cast: Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Fred
Mace

MABEL'S ADVENTURES *

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Dec. 16, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Ford
Sterling, Henry Lehrman, Eugenia Forde,
Frank Opperman
* Niles Essanay Film Museum, July 2020

THE DRUMMER'S VACATION

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Dec. 23, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Fred Mace, Alice Davenport, Mabel
Normand

THE DUEL

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Dec. 30, 1912
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand,
Fido (dog)

MABEL'S STRATEGEM *

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Dec. 30, 1912
dir. George Nichols
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Alice
Davenport
* Blackhawk; Cineteca del Friuli

SAVING MABEL'S DAD

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Jan. 6, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Fred Mace, Mabel, Ford Sterling,
George Nichols, Henry Lehrman, Joseph
Graybill?

THE CURE THAT FAILED *

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Jan. 13, 1913
dir. George Nichols
cast: Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Fred
Mace
* BFI, London

THE MISTAKEN MASHER

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Jan. 27, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand,
Mack Sennett

DEACON OUTWITTED *

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Jan. 27, 1913
dir. Henry Lehrman
cast: Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand,
Harry McCoy, Betty Schade,
* Library and Archives of Canada

JUST BROWN'S LUCK

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, Feb. 3, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Ford Sterling, Fred Mace, Mabel
Normand, Alice Davenport

THE BATTLE OF WHO RUN

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Feb. 6, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Fred Mace, Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand, Nick Cogley

HEINZE'S RESURRECTION

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Feb. 13, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Edgar Kennedy, Hank Mann, Betty Schade, Nick Cogley

MABEL'S HEROES

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Feb. 17, 1913
dir. George Nichols
cast: Mabel Normand, Mack Sennett, Fred Mace, Nick Cogley, Edgar Kennedy

THE PROFESSOR'S DAUGHTER

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Feb. 24, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Fred Mace, Evelyn Quick

A TANGLED AFFAIR

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Feb. 24, 1913
dir. Henry Lehrman
cast: Mabel Normand, Henry Lehrman, Harry McCoy

A RED HOT ROMANCE

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Feb. 27, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Ford Sterling

A DOCTORED AFFAIR

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Feb. 27, 1913
dir. Henry Lehrman
cast: Mabel Normand, Harry McCoy, Betty Schade

THE SLEUTHS AT THE FLORAL PARADE

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Mar. 6, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Fred Mace, Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand

THE RURAL THIRD DEGREE

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Mar. 6, 1913
dir. George Nichols
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace

A STRONG REVENGE *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Mar. 10, 1913
Keystone-Mutual, dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand, Nick Cogley
* EG

FOILING FICKLE FATHER

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Mar. 13, 1913
dir. Mabel Normand?
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, George Nichols, Ford Sterling

THE RUBE AND THE BARON

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Mar. 20, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Fred Mace, Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand

AT TWELVE O'CLOCK

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Mar. 27, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Mack Sennett

HER NEW BEAU

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Mar. 31, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Mack Sennett

ON HIS WEDDING DAY *

Keystone-Mutual
527 feet; rel: Mar. 31, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Ford Stirling, Dot Farley, Nick Cogley, Mabel Normand, Charles Avery
filmed 2-1-1913 to 2-3-1913
Location: Echo Park
* Cinemuseum, London; Turner Classic Movies

HIDE AND SEEK *

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Apr. 3, 1913
dir. George Nichols
cast: Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Betty Schade, Helen Holmes, Edgar Kennedy, Nick Cogley, Paul Jacobs
* LC

THOSE GOOD OLD DAYS *?

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Apr. 7, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Fred Mace, Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Phyllis Allen
* Blackhawk & or Lobster Films?

FATHER'S CHOICE

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Apr. 10, 1913
dir. George Nichols
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, George Nichols, Ford Sterling

BANGVILLE POLICE *

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Apr. 24, 1913
working title: *False Alarms*
dir. Henry Lehrman
cast: Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Dot Farley, Nick Cogley, Edgar Kennedy, Hank Mann?, Betty Schade?
finished: 3/17/1913

* Blackhawk

THE NEW CONDUCTOR

Keystone-Mutual

½ reel, rel: Apr. 28, 1913

working title: *The Car*

dir: Mack Sennett, cast: Ford Sterling, Phyllis Allen, Edgar Kennedy, Mabel Normand(?)

Note. Based on a still, in 2006 this lost film was brought to my attention by Marilyn Slater as being a previously unidentified film of Mabel's. The evidence would seem to support this view, though whether Mabel appeared only briefly as an extra or a main character is not clear.

THE RAGTIME BAND *

Keystone-Mutual

1 reel, rel: May 1, 1913

The Band also *The Jazz Band*, *That Ragtime Band*²⁷⁰

dir. Mack Sennett

cast: Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Raymond Hatton, Alice Davenport, Nick Cogley

finished 3/27/1913

* EG; LC?

A LITTLE HERO *

Keystone-Mutual

1/2 reel, rel: May 8, 1913

The Dog and the Cat

dir. George Nichols

cast: Mabel Normand, Pepper the (Keystone) cat

finished: 5/1/1913

* BFI; Nederland Film Museum, Amsterdam

MABEL'S AWFUL MISTAKE *²⁷¹

Keystone-Mutual

1 reel, rel: May 12, 1913

The Sawmill; Her Deceitful Lover

dir. Mack Sennett

cast: Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Edgar Kennedy

finished: 4/5/1913

* George Eastman House, Rochester, NY

HUBBY'S JOB

Keystone-Mutual

1/2 reel, rel: May 19, 1913

The Porter

dir. Mack Sennett?

cast: Fred Mace, Mabel Normand, Dot Farley, Chester Conklin, Harry McCoy
finished: 4/19/1913

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY

Keystone-Mutual

²⁷⁰ Brent Walker gives this title as *That Ragtime Band*; which may well be the more correct. However, I decided to go with Lahue on this one until I see the original record myself.

²⁷¹ This film has "Mabel" being strapped to a buzz-saw track by villainous Ford Sterling; a gag of course commonly used in countless comedy films afterward.

1 reel, rel: May 22, 1913

The Jury

dir. Mack Sennett

cast: Fred Mace, Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Hank Mann

finished: 4/21/1913

BARNEY OLDFIELD'S RACE FOR A LIFE *

Keystone-Mutual

1 reel, rel: June 3, 1913

Railroad Picture

dir. Mack Sennett, cam. Lee Bartholomew and Walter Wright

cast: Ford Sterling, Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand, Barney Oldfield, Helen Holmes, William Hauber

finished: 4/24/1913

* Blackhawk

PASSIONS HE HAD THREE

Keystone-Mutual

1/2 reel, rel: June 5, 1913

Country Boys

dir. Henry Lehrman

cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand, Al St. John, Dot Farley, Betty Schade

finished: 5/3/1913

THE HANSOM DRIVER

Keystone-Mutual

1/2 reel, rel: June 12, 1913

The Hackman

dir. Mack Sennett

cast: Mack Sennett, Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand

finished: 5/3/1913

THE SPEED QUEEN

Keystone-Mutual

1 reel, rel: June 12, 1913

The Speeders

dir. Mack Sennett

cast: Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Nick Cogley

finished: 5/9/1913

THE WAITER'S PICNIC

Keystone-Mutual

1 reel, rel: June 16, 1913

The Chef

dir. Mack Sennett

cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Nick Cogley, Hank Mann, Al St. John

finished: 5/15/1913

FOR THE LOVE OF MABEL *?

Keystone-Mutual

1 reel, rel: June 30, 1913

The Melodrama

dir. Henry Lehrman

cast: Mabel Normand, Roscoe Arbuckle, Ford Sterling

finished: 6/6/1913

THE TELL-TALE LIGHT

Keystone-Mutual

1 reel, rel: July 10, 1913

The Mirror

dir. Mack Sennett

cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand,
Charles Avery, Alice Davenport
finished: 6/16/1913

A NOISE FROM THE DEEP *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: July 17, 1913
A New Trick
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand
finished: 6/23/1913
* MOMA, Jugoslovenska Kinoteka
(Serbia)

LOVE AND COURAGE

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: July 21, 1913
Rubes
dir. Henry Lehrman
cast: Mabel Normand, Roscoe Arbuckle,
Ford Sterling?
finished: 6/25/1913

PROFESSOR BEAN'S REMOVAL

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: July 31, 1913
House Moving
dir. Henry Lehrman
cast: Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand,
Roscoe Arbuckle
finished: 6/25/1913

THE RIOT *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Aug. 11, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand,
Alice Davenport, Nick Cogley, Keystone
Kids., finished: 7/25/1913
* BFI; Cinemuseum, London; Filmoteca
de Catalunya, Barcelona

BABY DAY

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Aug. 25, 1913
Misplaced Baby
dir. Wilfred Lucas
cast: Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling
finished: 7/30/1913

MABEL'S NEW HERO *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Aug. 28, 1913
The Balloon
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mabel Normand, Roscoe Arbuckle,
Charles Avery, Edgar Kennedy
finished: 8/2/1913
* Blackhawk

MABEL'S DRAMATIC CAREER *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Sept. 8, 1913
The Actress
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand,
Alice Davenport, Roscoe Arbuckle, Ford
Sterling, Virginia Kirtley, Charles Avery,
Mack Swain, Paul Jacobs
finished: 8/12/1913
* Blackhawk

THE GYPSY QUEEN

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Sept. 11, 1913
The Gypsy
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand,
Nick Cogley
finished: 8/16/1913

THE FATAL TAXICAB

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Sept. 18, 1913
The Taxi Cab
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand,
Roscoe Arbuckle
finished: 8/21/1913

WHEN DREAMS COME TRUE *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Sept. 22, 1913
The Snake
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling
finished: 9/2/1913
* George Eastman House, Rochester, NY

THE BOWLING MATCH *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Sept. 27, 1913
The Bowlers
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling
finished: 9/2/1913
* MOMA; Archiva de Filme (Romania)

THE SPEED KINGS *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Sept. 30, 1913
dir. Wilfred Lucas
cast: Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling,
Teddy Tetzlaff, Earl Cooper, Roscoe
Arbuckle, Paul Jacobs, Barney Oldfield,
Ralph De Palma, Spencer Wishart
Location: Santa Monica and the Corona
auto races, CA.
* Blackhawk

LOVE SICKNESS AT SEA

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Nov. 6, 1913
The Hero
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand,
Ford Sterling
finished: 10/3/1913

A MUDDY ROMANCE *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Nov. 20, 1913
The Lake
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand,
Charles Avery, Mack Swain, William
Hauber
finished: 10/25/1913
Location: Keystone, Echo Park, Los
Angeles, CA
* BFI; LC

COHEN SAVES THE FLAG *

Keystone-Mutual

1 reel, rel: Nov. 27, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand,
Nick Cogley
Location: Ince filming site

THE GUSHER *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Dec. 15, 1913
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling,
Mack Swain, Al St. John, Keystone Cops
finished: 11/8/1913
* Film Museum, Munich

FATTY'S FLIRTATION

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Dec. 18, 1913
The Masher
dir. George Nichols
cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand,
Minta Durfee, Ford Sterling, William
Hauber
finished: 11/13/1913

ZUZU, THE BAND LEADER *

Keystone-Mutual
2 reels, rel: Dec. 24, 1913
The Bandmaster
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Ford Sterling, Mabel Normand,
Charles Haggerty, Hank Mann
finished: 10/16/1913

THE CHAMPION

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Dec. 27, 1913
Racing
dir. Henry Lehrman
cast: Mabel Normand, Hank Mann, Harry
McCoy, Al St. John
finished: 11/29/1913

A MISPLACED FOOT

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Jan. 1, 1914
Comedy of Errors
dir. Wilfred Lucas
cast: Mabel Normand, Roscoe Arbuckle,
Minta Durfee
finished: 12/3/1913

A GLIMPSE OF LOS ANGELES

Keystone-Mutual
1/2 reel, rel: Jan. 1, 1914
Educational
dir. Wilfred Lucas
cast: Mabel Normand
finished: 12/3/1913

MABEL'S STORMY LOVE AFFAIR

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Jan. 5, 1914
Servant Hero
dir. George Nichols
cast: Mabel Normand, Alice Davenport,
Edgar Kennedy, Nick Cogley, Hank Mann
finished: 12/14/1913

WON IN A CLOSET²⁷²

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Jan. 22, 1914
The Rube
dir. Mabel Normand
cast: Mabel Normand, Harry McCoy,
Edgar Kennedy, Alice Davenport, Hank
Mann, Nick Cogley
finished: 12/30/1913

MABEL'S BEAR ESCAPE

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Jan. 31, 1914
Three Bears
dir. Mabel Normand
cast: Mabel Normand
finished: 1/11/1914

**MABEL'S STRANGE
PREDICAMENT ***

Keystone-Mutual
1015 ft., rel: Feb. 9, 1914
Pajamas
dir. Henry Lehrman and Mack Sennett,
auth. Henry Lehrman, cam. Hans
Koenekamp
cast: Mabel Normand, Charlie Chaplin,
Chester Conklin, Alice Davenport, Harry
McCoy, Al St. John, William Hauber
finished: 1/20/1914
* BFI; LC; MOMA; UCLA

LOVE AND GASOLINE

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, Feb. 21, 1914
Skidding Auto, also *The Skidding Joy
Riders*
dir. Mabel Normand
cast: Mabel Normand, Mack Swain,
Phyllis Allen, Alice Davenport
finished: 2/2/1914

MACK AT IT AGAIN

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Apr. 6, 1914
The Fire

²⁷² The copy of this said to have been found in New Zealand is, in this writer's opinion, a hoax film. Reasons for my believing such to be the case are 1) the only recognizable Keystone players are Normand and Davenport; while *none* of the rest of the reported cast are present, 2) Although film preservation.org (which hosts the film online) speaks of Charles Avery as Mabel's beau, Charles Avery also is no where to be found here; in addition to being not listed in the original cast; 3) "Won in a Closet" is reported a 1 reel film. The "discovered" short is a 2 reeler; 4) Except for the interior at the police station (and *possibly* also the interior of the home), none of the interior sets or exteriors matches anything I have seen in a Keystone film; 5) Again, based on other Keystone films, the cast is much too large for such a trivial short, and it is unlikely Sennett would be spending so much extra for what is obviously not needed; 6) The film has what strikes one as a claustrophobic and, if I may say so, "dirty" feel, and Mabel is notably and uncharacteristically stiff and devoid of any *real* warmth; 6) It is an obvious semi-remake of "The Bangville Police" made almost a year prior; with Mabel wearing the identical clothes she wore in that film. And there are other reasons. But these I hope will in the meantime suffice. As to exactly how such a fabrication was done, I admittedly could not quite tell you; yet I can mention seeing other silent comedy hoax films; such as, for instance, the supposed "Charley Bowers" short found in "The Slapstick Encyclopedia" put out by Kino video at one time, but no longer currently available.

dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand
finished: 3/17/1914

MABEL AT THE WHEEL *

Keystone-Mutual
1900 ft., rel: Apr. 18, 1914
Racing Queen
dir. Mabel Normand and Mack Sennett,
auth.
Mabel Normand and or Sennett?
cast: Mabel Normand, Charlie Chaplin,
Harry McCoy, Chester Conklin, Mack
Sennett, Al St. John, Fred Mace, Joe
Bordeaux, Mack Swain, William Hauber
finished: 3/31/1914
* BFI; LC; UCLA

WHERE HAZEL MET THE VILLAIN

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: May 23, 1914
Burglars Union
dir. Roscoe Arbuckle
cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand
finished: 4/6/1914

CAUGHT IN A CABARET *

Keystone-Mutual
1968 ft., rel: May 27, 1914
The Waiter
dir. Mabel Normand and Charlie Chaplin,
auth. Mabel Normand
cast: Charlie Chaplin, Mabel Normand,
Harry McCoy, Chester Conklin, Edgar
Kennedy, Minta Durfee, Phyllis Allen,
Joseph Swickard, Alice Davenport,
Gordon Griffith, Alice Howell, Hank
Mann, Wallace Macdonald, William
Hauber
finished: 4/11/1914
* Blackhawk

MABEL'S NERVE

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: May 16, 1914
The Leap
dir. George Nichols
cast: Mabel Normand, Harry McCoy,
Mack Swain
finished: 4/30/1914

THE ALARM

Keystone-Mutual
2 reels, rel: May 28, 1914
Fireman's Picnic
dir. Roscoe Arbuckle
cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand,
Al St. John, Minta Durfee, Hank Mann
finished: 5/16/1914

THE FATAL MALLETT *

Keystone-Mutual
1120 ft., rel: June 1, 1914
The Knockout
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Mack Sennett
cast: Charlie Chaplin, Mack Sennett,
Mabel Normand, Mack Swain
finished: 5/16/1914
Location: Echo Park, Los Angeles
* UCLA; Academy Film Archive
(MAAS); BFI

HER FRIEND THE BANDIT

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: June 4, 1914
The Italian
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Charlie Chaplin, Mabel Normand,
Charles Murray,
finished: 5/22/1914

MABEL'S BUSY DAY *

Keystone-Mutual
998 ft, rel: June 13, 1914
Weine Story
dir. Mabel Normand and Charlie Chaplin
auth. Mabel Normand
cast: Mabel Normand, Charlie Chaplin,
Chester Conklin, Slim Summerville, Billie
Bennett, Harry McCoy, Wallace
MacDonald, Edgar Kennedy, Al St. John,
Charles Parrot (Charley Chase), Mack
Sennett, Henry Lehrman?
finished: 5/30/1914
* EG

MABEL'S MARRIED LIFE *

Keystone-Mutual
1015 ft., rel: June 20, 1914
His Wife's Birthday
dir. Charlie Chaplin and Mabel Normand,
auth. Charlie Chaplin
cast: Charlie Chaplin, Mabel Normand,
Mack Swain, Alice Howell, Hank Mann,
Charles Murray, Harry McCoy, Wallace
MacDonald, Al St. John, Alice Davenport
finished: 6/6/1914
* Blackhawk

MABEL'S NEW JOB

Keystone-Mutual
2 reels, rel: July 16, 1914
Fake Suicide
dir. George Nichols
cast: Mabel Normand, Chester Conklin,
Alice Davenport, Charley Chase, Roscoe
Arbuckle, Al St. John
finished: 7/3/1914

THE NEW YORK GIRL

Keystone-Mutual
2 reels, rel: Aug. 6, 1914
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand,
Chester Conklin, Slim Summerville, Frank
Hayes
filmed: 6-29-1914 to 7-16-1914

THOSE COUNTRY KIDS *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Aug. 20, 1914
The Rural Rivals
dir. Roscoe Arbuckle
cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand,
Al St. John, Alice Davenport, Frank
Hayes, Joseph Swickard, Slim
Summerville, Frank Opperman, Keystone
Cops
finished: 8/5/1914
* LC, National Film Archive, London

THE MASQUERADER*

Keystone-Mutual
1030 ft., rel: Aug. 27, 1914

Queen of the Movies

Dir. Charlie Chaplin
cast: Charlie Chaplin, Roscoe Arbuckle,
Charles Murray, Jess Dandy, Minta
Dufree, Cecile Arnold,
Vivian Edwards, Harry McCoy, Charles
Parrot (Charley Chase), Mabel Normand
(in a brief cameo role at the very
beginning of the film, but which sequence
is often found cut out or absent in many
prints.)

MABEL'S LATEST PRANK

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Sept. 10, 1914
The Fatal Photograph, also *A Touch of
Rheumatism*
dir. Mack Sennett & Mabel Normand?,
auth. Mabel Normand
cast: Mabel Normand, Slim Summerville,
Mack Sennett, Hank Mann
finished: 8/22/1914

MABEL'S BLUNDER *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Sept. 12, 1914
The False Chauffeur
dir. Mabel Normand, auth. Mabel
Normand
cast: Mabel Normand, Harry McCoy,
Charles Bennett, Charles Parrott (Charley
Chase)
finished: 8/24/1914
* Academy Film Archive (MAAS);
Blackhawk; LC

HELLO MABEL*

Keystone-Mutual
2 reels, rel: Oct. 8, 1914
The Hello Girl
dir. Mabel Normand
cast: Mabel Normand, Mack Swain,
Harry McCoy, Alice Davenport, Charles
Parrott (Charley Chase), Nick Cogley,
Charles Bennett
finished: 9/16/1914

A GENTLEMAN OF NERVE *

Keystone-Mutual
1030 ft., rel: Oct. 29, 1914
Attending the Races
dir. Charlie Chaplin, auth. Charlie Chaplin
cast: Charlie Chaplin, Mabel Normand,
Mack Swain, Chester Conklin, Phyllis
Allen, Edgar Kennedy, Charley Chase,
Alice Davenport, Barney Oldfield, Norma
Nicholls, Cecile Arnold, Harry McCoy
finished: 10/7/1914
Location: outskirts of Beverly Hills, Los
Angeles, CA
* BFI; LC

LOVER'S POST OFFICE

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Nov. 2, 1914
dir. Roscoe Arbuckle
cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand,
Minta Dufree
finished: 10/15/1914

HIS TRYSTING PLACE *

Keystone-Mutual

2000 ft., rel: Nov. 9, 1914

Ingratitude

dir. Charlie Chaplin, auth. Charlie Chaplin
cast: Charlie Chaplin, Mabel Normand,
Mack Swain, Phyllis Allen
Location: Keystone studio
finished: 10/1/1914
* Archives Françaises du Film; BFI; Geo.
Eastman House; UCLA

TILLIE'S PUNCTURED ROMANCE

*

Mack Sennett Productions
6000 ft., rel: Nov. 14, 1914
Dressler No. 1
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Marie Dressler (Tillie Banks),
Charlie Chaplin (Charlie, a City Slicker),
Mabel Normand (Mabel, his girl friend),
Mack Swain (John Banks, Tillie's Father),
Charles Bennett (Douglas Banks, Tillie's
Uncle), Charles Murray (Detective),
Charley Chase (Detective), Edgar
Kennedy (Restaurant Proprietor), Harry
McCoy (Pianist), Minta Dufree (Maid),
Phyllis Allen (Wardress), Alice Davenport
(Guest), Slim Summerville (Policeman),
Al St. John (Policeman), Wallace
MacDonald (Policeman), Joe Bordeaux
(Policeman), G. G. Ligon (Policeman),
Gordon Griffith (Newsboy), Billie
Bennett (Girl), Rev. D. Simpson
(Himself), William Hauber (Policeman)
Location: Keystone studio, Los Angeles,
CA
finished: 7/25/1914
copyright: Mar. 23, 1915
* Blackhawk; Killiam

HOW HEROES ARE MADE *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Nov. 14, 1914
Kidnapping Lizzie
dir. Charles Parrot (Charley Chase)
cast: Mabel Normand, Chester Conklin,
Slim Summerville, Al St. John, Charles
Parrot (Charley Chase)
finished: 10/28/1914
copyright: Nov. 14, 1914
* LC, Killiam

FATTY'S JONAH DAY *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Nov. 16, 1914
Park Troubles
dir. Roscoe Arbuckle
cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand,
Phyllis Allen, Minta Dufree, Hank Mann,
Harry McCoy, Mack Swain
finished: 10/29/1914
* BFI; MOMA

FATTY'S WINE PARTY *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: Nov. 21, 1914
Only a Dollar
dir. Roscoe Arbuckle
cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand,
Syd Chaplin, Minta Dufree, Harry
McCoy, Alice Davenport
finished: 11/6/1914
copyright: Nov. 21, 1914

* BFI; LC

THE SEA NYMPHS *

Keystone-Mutual

2 reels, rel: Nov. 23, 1914

Catalina Story

dir. Roscoe Arbuckle

cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand,
Mack Swain

finished: 9/12/1914

copyright: Nov. 21, 1914

* Filmmuseum, Munich; Filmmuseum,
Denmark

GETTING ACQUAINTED *

Keystone-Mutual

1025 ft., rel: Dec 5, 1914

The Flirts

dir. Charlie Chaplin

cast: Charlie Chaplin, Mack Swain,
Mabel Normand, Phyllis Allen, Edgar
Kennedy, Harry McCoy, Cecile Arnold,
Emma Clifton

finished: 11/22/1914

copyright: Dec. 5, 1914

* BFI; MOMA

MABEL AND FATTY'S WASH DAY *

Keystone-Mutual

1 reel, rel: Jan. 14, 1915

Mabel's Flirtation

dir. Roscoe Arbuckle

cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand,
Harry McCoy, Alice Davenport, Al St.
John, Hank Mann, Luke (dog)

finished: 1/4/1915

Location: Keystone, Hollenbeck Park,
Los Angeles, CA

copyright: Jan. 14, 1915

* LC

FATTY AND MABEL'S SIMPLE

LIFE *

Keystone-Mutual

2 reels, rel: Jan. 18, 1915

The Runaway Auto

dir. Roscoe Arbuckle

cast: Mabel Normand, Roscoe Arbuckle,
Joseph Swickard, Al St. John, Hank
Mann

finished: 1/4/1915

Location: Keystone, farm in Los Angeles,
CA

copyright: Jan. 16, 1915

* LC

**FATTY AND MABEL AT THE SAN
DIEGO EXPOSITION ***

Keystone-Mutual

1 reel, rel: Jan. 23, 1915

Fatty and Mabel at the Fair

dir. Roscoe Arbuckle

cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand,
Minta Durfee, Harry Gribbon, Edgar
Kennedy, Frank Hayes

finished: 1/11/1915

Location: San Diego, CA

copyright: Jan. 23, 1915

* LC

MABEL, FATTY AND THE LAW *

Keystone-Mutual

1 reel, rel: Jan. 28, 1915

No Flirting Allowed

Keystone-Mutual, dir. Roscoe Arbuckle

cast: Mabel Normand, Roscoe Arbuckle,
Harry Gribbon, Minta Durfee, Estelle
Allen, Frank Hayes, Joe Bordeaux, Al St.
John, Glen Cavender, Joe Swickard,
Alice Davenport, Billie Bennett

finished: 1/18/1915

Location: Keystone studio, Hollenbeck
Park

copyright: Jan. 28, 1915

* LC

**FATTY AND MABEL'S MARRIED
LIFE ***

Keystone-Mutual

1 reel, rel: Feb. 11, 1915

The Monkey Scare

dir. Roscoe Arbuckle

cast: Mabel Normand, Roscoe Arbuckle,
Glen Cavender, Al St. John, Mae Busch,
Cecile Arnold

finished: 1/29/1915

Location: Keystone studio, Echo Park,
Edendale Blvd.

copyright: Feb. 11, 1915

* LC

THAT LITTLE BAND OF GOLD *

Keystone-Mutual

2 reels, rel: Mar. 15, 1915

Before and After Marriage

dir. Roscoe Arbuckle

cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand,
Ford Sterling, Alice Davenport, Ethel
Madison, Charles Arling, Al St. John,
Charley Chase, Glen Cavender, Frank
Hayes, Helen Carlyle (formerly mistaken
to be Estelle Allen), Billie Brockwell,
Edgar Kennedy, Dora Rogers, Slim
Summerville

finished: 2/17/1915

Location: Interior of Alexandria Hotel;

Mason Opera House; Keystone Studio

copyright: Mar. 13, 1915

* LC

WISHED ON MABEL *

Keystone-Mutual

1 reel, rel: Apr. 19, 1915

Golden Gate Park Story

dir. Roscoe Arbuckle

cast: Mabel Normand, Roscoe Arbuckle,
Alice Davenport, Joe Bordeaux, Edgar
Kennedy

finished: 4/9/1915

Location: Golden Gate Park, San
Francisco, CA

copyright: Apr. 19, 1915

* LC

**MABEL AND FATTY VIEWING THE
WORLD'S FAIR AT SAN
FRANCISCO ***

Keystone-Mutual

The Frisco Story

1 reel, rel: Apr. 22, 1915

dir. Roscoe Arbuckle

cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand,
with appearances by Mdme. Shuman-
Heink and Mayor James Rolph

finished: 4/16/1915
Location: San Francisco, CA
copyright: Apr. 22, 1915
* Blackhawk

MABEL'S WILFUL WAY *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: May 1, 1915
Idora Park Story
dir. Roscoe Arbuckle, and Mabel Normand?
cast: Mabel Normand, Roscoe Arbuckle, Edgar Kennedy, Alice Davenport, Joe Bordeaux
finished: 4/23/1915
Location: Idora Park, Oakland, CA
copyright: May 1, 1915
* LC

THEIR SOCIAL SPLASH *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: May 26, 1915
The Fatal Wedding
dir. Arvid Gillstrom
cast: Charles Murray, Polly Moran, Slim Summerville, Mabel Normand, Frank Hayes
finished: 4/20/1915
copyright: April 26, 1915
* BFI; Cineteca del Friuli; Warner's archives

MABEL LOST AND WON *

Keystone-Mutual
1 reel, rel: June 3, 1915
Small Town "A"
dir. Mabel Normand
cast: Mabel Normand, Owen Moore, Alice Davenport, Dora Rogers, Mack Swain, Estelle Allen, Hugh Fay
finished: 5/26/1915
Location: Keystone studio, Los Angeles
copyright: June 25, 1915
* LC

THE LITTLE TEACHER *

Keystone-Mutual
2 reels, rel: June 21, 1915
Small Town School, also *A Small Town Bully*
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mabel Normand, Mack Sennett, Owen Moore, Roscoe Arbuckle, Frank Opperman, Vivian Edwards, Frank Hayes, Billie Brockwell
finished: 5/25/1915
Location: Keystone studio, Hollenbeck Park, Los Angeles
copyright: June 21, 1915
* Blackhawk; LC

MY VALET *

Triangle-Keystone
4 reels, rel: Oct. 27, 1915
dir. Mack Sennett, auth. Sennett?
cast: Raymond Hitchcock, Mabel Normand, Mack Sennett, Fred Mace, Frank Opperman, Alice Davenport
copyright: Oct. 28, 1915 and Nov. 8, 1916
* George Eastman House, Rochester, NY; UCLA

STOLEN MAGIC

Triangle-Keystone
2 reels, rel: Nov. 28, 1915
dir. Mack Sennett
cast: Mack Sennett, Raymond Hitchcock, Mabel Normand, Alice Davenport, Frank Hayes
copyright: Oct. 29, 1915

FATTY AND MABEL ADRIFT *

Triangle-Keystone
2674 ft., rel: Jan. 8, 1916
House at Sea
dir. Roscoe Arbuckle
cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand, Al St. John, Frank Hayes, May Wells, Glen Cavender, Wayland Trask, James Bryant, Joe Bordeaux, Luke (dog)
Location: Santa Monica, CA
copyright: Jan. 10, 1916
* Blackhawk; LC; UCLA

HE DID AND HE DIDN'T *

Triangle-Keystone
2 reels, rel: Jan. 30, 1916
Love and Lobsters
dir. Roscoe Arbuckle, cam. Elgin Lessley
cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand, William Jefferson, Al St. John, Joe Bordeaux, James Bryant, Minta Durfee, G. A. Ely, Lloyd Peddrick, Jean Darnell (house maid)
filmed: 1/1916
Location: Triangle studio, Ft. Lee, NJ
copyright: Feb. 9, 1916
* Geo. Eastman House; UCLA
THE BRIGHT LIGHTS
Triangle-Keystone
2 reels, rel: Feb. 14, 1916
The Lure of Broadway
dir. Roscoe Arbuckle
cast: Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand, James Bryant, Minta Durfee, G.A. Ely
Location: Triangle studio, Ft. Lee, NJ
copyright: Feb. 14, 1916

GAUMONT GRAPHIC NEWSREEL #39

?, rel: May 22, 1916
cast: Mabel Normand, Roscoe Arbuckle, Chester Conklin

DODGING A MILLION

Goldwyn
6 reels, rel: Jan 28, 1918
Arabelle Flynn
dir. George Loane Tucker, auth. Edgar Selwyn and Aubrey M. Kennedy, cam. Oliver T. Marsh, Art. Dir. Hugo Ballin
cast: Mabel Normand, Tom Moore, George Fawcett, J. Herbert Frank, Shirley Aubert, Rita Dane, Norah Sprague, Bruce Biddle, Armand Cortez, Joseph Smiley, Edwards Davis, Hubert Druce, John Sutherland
Location: Goldwyn studio, Ft. Lee, NJ
Copyright: Jan. 22, 1918

THE FLOOR BELOW *

Goldwyn
6 reels, rel: Mar. 10, 1918

Last Chance

dir. Clarence G. Badger, auth. Elaine Sterne, cam. Oliver T. Marsh
cast: Mabel Normand (Patricia O'Rourke), Tom Moore (Hunter Mason), Helen Dahl (Louise Vane), Wallace McCutcheon (Monty Latham), Lincoln Plummer (Uncle Amos), Charlotte Granville (Mrs. Mason), A. Romaine Callender (Ziegler), Louis R. Griswell (Stubbs), Willard Dashiell (Managing Editor), Texas Charwaite, W. W. Black
Location: Goldwyn studio, Ft. Lee, NJ
copyright: Mar. 7, 1918
* Private Collector. The film was screened at the Nederland Film Museum film festival Amsterdam, Holland. in 2007.

JOAN OF PLATTSBURG

Goldwyn
5 reels, rel: May 5, 1918
dir. George Loane Tucker and William Humphrey, auth. George Loane Tucker from a play by Porter Emerson Browne, cam. Oliver T. Marsh, Art. Dir. Hugo Ballin
cast: Mabel Normand (Joan), Robert Elliot (Captain Lane), William Fredricks (Supt. Fisher), Joseph Smiley (Ingleton), Edward Elkas (Silverstein), John W. Dillon (Miggs), Willard Dashiell (Colonel), Edith McAlpin (Mrs. Lane), Isabel Vernon (Mrs. Miggs)
Location: Goldwyn studio, Ft. Lee, NJ
copyright: Apr. 24, 1918

THE VENUS MODEL

Goldwyn
5 reels, rel: June 16, 1918
dir. Clarence G. Badger, auth. Frederic Chapin from a story by H.R. Durant, Art. Dir. Hugo Ballin
cast: Mabel Normand (Kitty O'Brien), Rod La Rocque (Paul Braddock), Alec B. Francis (John Braddock), Alfred Hickman (Nathan Bergman), Edward Boulden (Bagley), Edward Elkas (Briggs), Albert Hackett (Boy), Una Trevelyn (Hattie Fenshaw), Nadia Gary ("Dimples" Briggs)
Location: Goldwyn studio, Ft. Lee, NJ
copyright: June 4, 1918

BACK TO THE WOODS

Goldwyn
5 reels, rel: July 28, 1918
dir. George Irving, auth. Ja. Clarkson Miller, cam J. C. Bitzer
cast: Mabel Normand (Stephanie Trent), Herbert Rawlinson (Jimmie Raymond), T. Henderson Murray (Stephen J. Trent), Arthur Housman (Bill Andrews), James Laffey
Location: West Virginia; Goldwyn studio, Ft. Lee, NJ
copyright: July 19, 1918

STAKE UNCLE SAM TO PLAY YOUR HAND

or

UNITED STATES FOURTH LIBERTY LOAN DRIVE, THE STORY OF THE BIGGEST GAME EVER PLAYED
Length: ?, rel: Aug. 1918
Goldwyn-war bond promo film-
dir. Hugo Ballin
cast: Mabel Normand, Pauline Fredrick, J. W. Herbert, Madge Kennedy, Tom Moore, Mae Marsh
Location: Goldwyn studio, Ft. Lee, NJ

MICKY *

Mack Sennett Productions (including initially, and shortly after defunct, Mabel Normand Feature Film Company)--Paramount (Sennett Studios-Western Import Company,Ltd.)
7 reels, rel: Aug. 11, 1918
Mountain Bred, also *Pat*
dir. F. Richard Jones, asst. director. George Nichols, auth. J. G. Hawkes, scenario. Anita Loos, photography Hans F. Koenekamp
cast: Mabel Normand (Mickey), Lew Cody (Reggie Drake), Wheeler Oakman (Herbert Thornhill), Minta Durfee (Elsie Drake), George Nichols (Joe Meadows), Minnie Devereaux (Minnie), Laura Lavarne (Mrs. Geoffrey Drake), Tom Kennedy (Tom Rawlings), Edgar Kennedy (Race Track Bookie), William Colvin (Butler), Joe Bordeaux (Stage Driver)
filmed: 1916-1917
Location: Mabel Normand Studio, Los Angeles; Lake Arrowhead, CA; race track in Phoenix, AZ
Produced and filmed, under F. Richard Jones direction, from August 1916 to April 1917
copyright: Feb. 25, 1918
* BFI; EG; LC; MOMA

PECK'S BAD GIRL

Goldwyn
5 reels, rel: Sept. 9, 1918
Oh, Oh Mabel
dir. Charles Giblyn, scen. J. Clarkson Miller, auth. Tex Charwate, cam. Louis Physioc, Art. Dir. Hugo Ballin
cast: Mabel Normand (Minnie Peck), Earle Foxe (Dick), Corinne Barker (Hortense Martinot), Blanche Davenport (Miss Olivia), W. Riley Hatch, Leslie Hunt (Adam Raskell), E.M. Favor (Peck), Edwin Sturgis (Pearson), Joseph Granby (Walker)
Location: Goldwyn studio, Ft. Lee, NJ
copyright: Sept. 2, 1918

A PERFECT 36

Goldwyn
5 reels, rel: Oct. 28, 1918
dir. Charles Giblyn, auth. Tex Charwate, cam. Louis Physioc, Art. Dir. Hugo Ballin
cast: Mabel Normand, Rod LaRocque, Flora Zabelle, Leila Romer, Louis R. Grisel, Edward Bernard
Location: Goldwyn studio, Ft. Lee, NJ
copyright: Nov. 16, 1918

SIS HOPKINS

Goldwyn

5 reels, rel: Feb. 9, 1919

dir. Clarence G. Badger, auth. Carrol Fleming and Edward E. Kidder, from a play by Rose Melville, cam. Percy Hilburn, Art. Dir. Hugo Ballin

cast: Mabel Normand (Sis Hopkins), John Bowers (Ridy Scarboro), Sam De Grasse (Vibert), Thomas Jefferson (Pa Hopkins), Nick Cogley (Ridy's Father), Eugenie Forde (Miss Peckover)

Location: Goldwyn studio, Culver City, CA

copyright: Jan. 30, 1919

THE PEST

Goldwyn

6 reels, rel: Apr. 20, 1919

Fogg's Ferry

dir. W. Christy Cabanne, auth. Melville W. Brown from story by Willard Mack written for Mabel Normand, cam. Percy Hilburn

cast: Mabel Normand, John Bowers, Charles Gerard, James Bradbury, Alec B. Francis, Leota Lorraine, Jack Curtis, Pearl Elmore, Asher Bledgett, Amy Bledgett, Noisy Wilson, Edward Jobson?

Location: Goldwyn studio, Culver City, CA

copyright: Apr. 9, 1919

WHEN DOCTORS DISAGREE *

Goldwyn

5 reels, rel: May 25, 1919

dir. Victor L. Schertzinger, scen. Melville W. Brown, auth. Anna F. Brand

cast: Mabel Normand, Walter Hiers, George Nichols, Fritz Ridgeway, William Buckley, Alec B. Francis, James Gordon, Pomeroy Cannon

Location: Goldwyn studio, Culver City, CA

copyright: May 10, 1919

* Cinematheque Royale de Belgique, film is reportedly in very fragile condition

UPSTAIRS

Goldwyn

5 reels, rel: Aug. 3, 1919

dir. Victor L. Schertzinger, auth. Robert F. Hill

from a story by Perley Poore Sheehan, film editor. Jack Dennis

cast: Mabel Normand, Cullen Landis, Hallam Cooley, Edwin Stevens, Robert Bolder, Buddy Post, Colin Kenny, Beatrice Burnham, Frederick Vroom, Kate Lester

Location: Goldwyn studio, Culver City, CA

copyright: July 24, 1919

THE JINX

Goldwyn

4,069 feet, rel: Sept. 28, 1919

The Empty Paradise

dir. Victor L. Schertzinger, auth. Shannon Fife, cam. George Webber, film editor. Jack Dennis, Art. Dir. Hugo Ballin

cast: Mabel Normand (Jinx), Cullen Landis ("Slicker" Evans - "The Wild Man"), Florence Carpenter (Rory Bory Alice), Gertrude Claire (Aunt Tina), Ogden Crane ("Bull" Hogarth), Clarence Arper (Sheriff Jepson), Francis Carpenter

Location: Goldwyn studio, Culver City, CA

copyright: Sept. 19, 1919

PINTO

Goldwyn

5 reels, rel: Feb. 1, 1920

dir. Victor L. Schertzinger, auth. Gerald C. Duffy from a story by Victor L. Schertzinger, cam. George Webber, Art. Dir. Hugo Ballin

cast: Mabel Normand (Pinto), Cullen Landis (Bob De Witt), Edward Jobson (Tobey), George Nichols (Pop Audrey), Edithe Chapman (Mrs. Audrey), Richard Cummings, George Kunkel, John Burton, Manuel R. Ojeda, Dwight Crittenden, Billy Elmer (Tousy), Hallam Cooley (Armand Cassel)

Location: Goldwyn studio, Culver City, CA

copyright: Dec. 9, 1919

THE SLIM PRINCESS

Goldwyn

6 reels, rel: July 4, 1920

dir. Victor L. Schertzinger, auth. Gerald C. Duffy from a story by George Ade, cam. George Webber, Art. Dir. Cedric A. Gibbons

cast: Mabel Normand (Kalora), Hugh Thompson (Pike), Tully Marshall (Popova), Russ Powell (Governor-General), Lillian Sylvester (Jeneka), Harry Lorraine (Detective), Pomeroy Cannon (Counsellor-General), Kate Lester

copyright: June 12, 1920

Location: Goldwyn studio, Culver City, CA

WHAT HAPPENED TO ROSA *

Goldwyn

4,148 ft., rel: Dec. 1920²⁷³

dir. Victor L. Schertzinger, auth. Gerald C. Duffy from a story by Pearl Lenore Curran, cam. George Webber, film editors. Robert Bishop, Jack Dennis

cast: Mabel Normand (Mayme Ladd, also Rosa Alvero), Hugh Thompson (Dr. Maynard Drew), Tully Marshall (Percy Peacock), Doris Pawn (Gwen Applebaum), Eugenie Besserer (Madame Yvette O'Donnell), Buster Trow (Spike), Adolphe Menjou

Location: Goldwyn studio, Culver City, CA, San Francisco, CA (exterior shots)

copyright: Nov. 22, 1920

* Cineteca del Friuli; LC

MOLLY O' *

Mack Sennett-Paramount

²⁷³ Although formal records give the release date of "What Happened to Rosa" as 23 April 1921, it actually came out in December 1920; indeed was reportedly ready for distribution as early as July of that year.

Released by: Mack Sennett-Associated First National

7,588 ft., rel: Dec. 1, 1921

dir. F. Richard Jones, assisted by Ray Grey, photography Homer Scott, auth. Mary Hunt and Fred Stowers, film edr. Allen McNeil, Titles John Gray, Art Director S. D. Barnes, Costumes Violet Schrader

cast: Mabel Normand (Molly O), Jack Mulhall (Dr. John S. Bryant), George Nichols (Tim O'Dair), Lowell Sherman (Fred Manchester), Eddie Gribbon (Jim Smith), Anna Hernandez (Mrs. Tim O'Dair), Jacqueline Logan (Miriam Manchester), Albert Hackett (Billy O'Dair), Ben Deeley (Albert Faulkner), Carl Stockdale (The Silhouette Man), Eugenie Besserer (Antonia Bacigalupi), Gloria Davenport (Mrs. James Wheaton Robbins)

filmed: 5/30 to 6/29, 1921

Locations: Los Angeles, CA, Pensacola, FL

copyright: Oct. 24, 1921

* Gosfilmofund, Moscow, Russia; UCLA

OH! MABEL BEHAVE*

Triangle-Photocraft Productions ¾

filmed by Sennett in April 1915 (and presumably at least May as well)

5 reels, rel: January 20, 1922

dir. Mack Sennett

cast: Mabel Normand, Owen Moore, Ford Sterling, Mack Sennett, George Ovey, Alice Davenport, Dora Rogers, Dave Anderson, Joseph Swickard, Hank Mann, Eddie Cline

* Cinematheque Francais, Paris

HEAD OVER HEELS *

Goldwyn

5 reels, rel: April, 1922

dir. Victor L. Schertzinger and Paul Bern, auth. Lillian Josephson and Gerald C. Duffy, from a book and musical comedy by Edgar Allen Woolf, suggested by a story by Nalbro Isadorah Bartley, photography. George Webber and Maximilian Fabian, film editor. Robert Bishop and Herbert S. Walde, Art. Dir. Cedric A. Gibbons

cast: Mabel Normand (Tina), Hugh Thompson (Lawson), Russ Powell (Uncle Bambinetti), Raymond Hatton (Pepper), Lionel Belmore (Wilkins), Adolph Menjou (Sterling), Lillyan Tashman (Babe Lorimer)

Location: Goldwyn studios, Culver City, CA

copyright: Apr. 20, 1922

* LC?; American Film Institute; UCLA

SUZANNA * (approx. 3/4ths of the film is known to survive)

Mack Sennett-Allied Producers and Distributors,

7940 ft., rel: Dec 24, 1922

dir. F. Richard Jones, auth. Linton Wells

cast: Mabel Normand (Suzanna), George Nichols (Don Fernando), Walter McGrail

(Francisco), Winifred Bryson (Dolores Rodriguez or Chiquita), Leon Barry (Senor Pancho Mendoza), Minnie Devereaux (Minnie-ha-ha), Eric Mayne (Don Diego), Evelyn Sherman (Dona Isabella), Aline Manning (Francisco's mother?), Black Hawk, Lon Pott (Miguel's father), George Cooper (Miquel), Carl Stockdale (Ruiz)

Location: Camulos Ranch (just outside of Fillmore, CA); San Luis Rey River, CA
copyright: Jan. 4, 1923²⁷⁴

THE EXTRA GIRL *

Mack Sennett-Associated Exhibitors

5750 ft., rel: Oct. 28, 1923

Millie of the Movies

dir. F. Richard Jones, photography Homer Scott, film editors Ray Enright, William Hombeck, Story by Mack Sennett from scenario by Bernard McConville, Titles: J. A. Waldron, Lighting: Paul Guerin

cast: Mabel Normand (Sue Graham), George Nichols (Pa Graham), Ralph Graves (Dave Giddings), Anna Hernandez (Ma Graham), Vernon Dent (Aaron Applejohn), Ramsey Wallace (T. Phillip Hackett), William Desmond (The Actor), Charlotte Mineau (Belle Brown), Eric Mayne (Studio Manager), Carl Stockdale (The Director), Charles K. French (Serial Director), Elsie Tarron (The Actress), Harry Gribbon, Mary Mason, Max Davidson, Billy Bevan, Louise Carver, Andre Beranger, Numa (a lion), Teddy (dog)

filmed: 4/23 to 7/14, 7/22 - 23, 1922

Location: Sennett studio, Los Angeles

copyright: Nov. 9, 1923

* Blackhawk; Killiam

RAGGEDY ROSE *

Hal Roach-Pathe

5 reels, rel: Nov. 7, 1926

dir. Richard Wallace in collaboration with Stan Laurel, Photography by Floyd Jackman and Jack Roach, Edited by Richard Currier, Titles by H. M. Walker
cast: Mabel Normand, Carl Miller, Max Davidson, James Finlayson, Anita Garvin, Laura Lavarne

Location: Roach studio, Los Angeles

copyright: Oct. 26, 1926

* BFI; EG; UCLA

THE NICKEL-HOPPER *

Hal Roach-Pathe

3 reels, rel: Dec. 5, 1926

dir. F. Richard Jones, Photography by Floyd Jackman, Edited by Richard Currier, Titles by H. M. Walker, Costumes by Lambert

cast: Mabel Normand, Michael S. Visaroff, Theodore von Eltz, Jimmy Anderson, Margaret Seddon, William Henry Pratt (later aka Boris Karloff), Oliver Hardy, James Finlayson

²⁷⁴ "Suzanna" was in production before and after the death of William Desmond Taylor; with the Taylor murder itself taking place during a break in filming.

copyright: Nov. 11, 1926
* Geo. Eastman House; UCLA

ANYTHING ONCE! *

Hal Roach-Pathe
2 reels, rel: Jan. 2, 1927
dir. F. Richard Jones
cast: Mabel Normand, James Finlayson,
Max Davidson, Theodore von Eltz, Nora
Hayden, Gustav Von Seyffertitz (given in
the credits as Von Sevefertitz), Leo White
copyright: Dec. 31, 1926

ONE HOUR MARRIED

Hal Roach-Pathe
2 reels, rel: Feb. 27, 1927
dir. Jerome Storm (also went by name of
"Jerome Strong" apparently) under
supervision of F. Richard Jones
cast: Mabel Normand, Creighton Hale,
James Finlayson, Noah Young, Sid
Crossly, Charles Geldert
copyright: Oct. 26, 1926

SHOULD MEN WALK HOME? *

Hal Roach-Pathe
2 reels, rel. ?
dir. Leo McCarey
cast: Mabel Normand, Creighton Hale,
Eugene Pallette, Oliver Hardy
copyright: Jan. 14, 1927
* BFI; UCLA